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Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Information and communications technology governance in United Nations system organizations" (JIU/REP/2011/9).

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE IN UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Information and communications technology (ICT) governance in United Nations system organizations

JIU/REP/2011/9

Objective

In recent years, the world has witnessed the rapid growth and ever-increasing importance of information and communication technologies (ICT). ICT has become a dynamic, strategic and indispensable asset of an organization in the achievement of its mission and goals.

How to harness the power of ICT effectively? How to maximize investment in ICT? How to mitigate the risks associated with ICT? All these questions point to and rely on one parameter: ICT governance.

The objective of the review is to conduct a comparative analysis of the different ICT governance frameworks, practices and processes in the various United Nations system organizations with a view to identifying best practices and lessons learned, and thereby promote effective ICT governance.

Main findings and conclusions

The report contains 11 recommendations, one of which is addressed to the legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations, nine to their executive heads and one to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

In the Inspectors' opinion, an effective ICT governance framework should include the following:

- A well-functioning ICT governance committee or equivalent, which should be composed of senior managers from all parts of the organizations and meet regularly, and whose functioning is reviewed periodically (recommendations 2 and 3);
- Strong leadership over the ICT governance infrastructure by the executive management, preferably at the level of the deputy head of the organizations (recommendation 1);
- An appropriate Chief Information Officer (CIO) or equivalent in a senior-level post with overall responsibilities and authority and access to the executive management (recommendation 4);
- A full-fledged corporate ICT strategy aligned to the organizations' business needs and priorities, and yielding true value of the ICT investment, which should be reviewed and updated periodically (recommendations 5 and 7);
- A well-established mechanism to monitor the implementation of the ICT strategy (recommendation 8);
- Strengthened efforts to track ICT costs in the organizations and conduct post-implementation reviews of major ICT investments so as to facilitate strategic decision-making, cost-effectiveness, accountability and transparency (recommendations 9 and 10).

Recommendation for consideration by the legislative organs

Recommendation 6
The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to present the corporate ICT strategies to member States for their information and support.

Recommendation for consideration by the CEB

Recommendation 11
The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the CEB, should streamline the Board's ICT Network by identifying and focusing on common ICT issues and providing clear guidance to the network in order to improve cooperation and coordination among the United Nations system organizations.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CBIT	Committee on Business and Information Technology
COBIT	Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology
EPM	Enterprise Portfolio Management
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTN	ICT Network of the United Nations System under the CEB
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISACA	Information Systems Audit and Control Association
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IT	Information Technology
ITGI	IT Governance Institute
ITIL	Information Technology Infrastructure Library
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-ICC	United Nations International Computing Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background, objectives, scope and methodology

1. As part of its programme of work for 2011, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), in response to a suggestion from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that was supported by a dozen other United Nations system organizations, conducted a review of "Information and communication technology (ICT) governance in the United Nations system organizations."

2. No system-wide review of ICT governance in the United Nations system organizations has yet been conducted. However, in 2008, the JIU issued two reports[1] which briefly touched on the topic of ICT governance. The reports stressed the importance of effective ICT governance as a critical factor for successful ICT operations in an organization. They also highlighted that ICT governance is an issue of critical significance for the United Nations system organizations, one which merited further study.

3. In his report "Investing in information and communications technology: status report" (A/62/502), the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that achieving effective ICT governance was a major challenge for large, complex and geographically dispersed organizations.[2]

4. The objective of this review is to conduct a comparative analysis of the different ICT governance frameworks, practices and processes in the various United Nations system organizations, with a view to identifying best practices and lessons learned and thereby promote effective ICT governance. The key aspects considered included the ICT governance structures in place; implementation of the organization's ICT strategy; strategic alignment of ICT with the organization's business objectives and mandate; ICT resource management, decision-making process and investment; ICT performance and risk management, including ICT security and business continuity/disaster recovery. In addition to ICT governance within the organizations, the review also examined ICT governance at the United Nations system-wide level, notably coordination and cooperation among the United Nations system organizations in the area of ICT, for example, through the ICT Network (ICTN) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM).

5. In the preparation of the report, the Inspectors took into consideration, as appropriate, internationally accepted ICT governance standards and methodologies considered industries best practice, such as the Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology (COBIT), developed by the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) and its affiliated IT Governance Institute (ITGI), the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), developed by the Government of the United Kingdom, Prince2 methodologies, ISO 20000 and 27000 standards for IT security, as well as ISO standard ISO/IEC 38500-2008 for corporate governance of information technology.

6. In accordance with JIU internal standards and guidelines and its internal working procedures, the methodology used to prepare this report included a preliminary review, questionnaires, interviews and an in-depth analysis. Interviews were conducted in Geneva, New York, Paris, Rome, Vienna and Washington DC with officials of most JIU participating organizations, as well as the CEB Secretariat. Consultation and dialogue were sought with all main stakeholders, including senior and executive managers, ICT officials, users as well as oversight officials.

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[1] See JIU/REP/2008/5, Review of ICT hosting services in the UN system organizations, and JIU/REP/2008/6, Review of management of internet websites in the UN system organizations; also JIU/REP/2002/9, Information management in the United Nations systems organizations.

[2] A/62/502, para. 2.

7. The report team also participated, upon invitation, in the 16th and 17th session of the CEB ICT Network (ICTN), held in April and October 2011 respectively, and discussed major issues concerning ICT governance with participants.

8. Other international organizations and financial institutions, such as the European Union (EU), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE), and the World Bank were also consulted. Given the wide range of issues covered, it was not possible to carry out an in-depth review of all of them in each and every United Nations system organization. Therefore, reference is made to organizations in particular contexts with the sole aim of providing examples.

9. Finally, the internal and external auditors of the United Nations system organizations and their evaluation offices have issued various reports touching on ICT governance. Those reports, as well as the ongoing discussions and debate at the CEB/HLCM level on pertinent issues were taken into account in the appropriate context.

10. As is customary, comments on the draft report were sought from the participating organizations and taken into account in the final report.

11. In accordance with article 11.2 of the JIU statute, this report was finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

12. To facilitate the handling of the report and the implementation of its recommendations and the monitoring thereof, the table in annex IV indicates whether the report is submitted to the organizations concerned for action or for information. The table identifies the recommendations relevant for each organization and specifies whether a decision by the legislative body of the organization or action by its executive head is required.

13. The Inspectors express their appreciation to all who assisted them in the preparation of this report, particularly those who participated in the interviews and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

II. GOVERNANCE

A. Definition of ICT governance

14. ICT governance is a subset discipline and an integral part of corporate governance. [3] "ICT governance is the responsibility of executives and the board of directors, and consists of the leadership, organisational structures and processes that ensure that the enterprise's ICT sustains and extends the organisation's strategies and objectives." [4]

15. In line with this definition, the Secretary-General, in a recent report, stated as follows: "The principles and processes associated with ICT decision-making and its underlying organizational structures come together under the broad concept of ICT governance. The ICT management framework clarifies how decisions are made, who provides inputs for the decisions, who is accountable and how ICT activities are coordinated within the

[3] The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines corporate governance of IT in paragraph 1.6.3 of its standard ISO/IEC 38500-2008, Corporate governance of information technology, as the system by which the current and future use of IT is directed and controlled. Corporate governance of IT involves evaluating and directing the use of IT to support the organization and monitoring this use to achieve plans. It includes the strategy and policies for using IT within an organization.

[4] See ITGI, *Board Briefing on IT Governance*, 2nd Edition, 2003, pp. 6-11, available at http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/Research/Documents/BoardBriefing/26904_Board_Briefing_final.pdf

Secretariat and ensures that key stakeholders take on the appropriate roles and responsibilities to clearly and effectively guide the management of the Organization's ICT activities and resources."[5]

16. According to COBIT, the governance of ICT is the pivot directing ICT endeavours and ensuring that ICT performance meets the following objectives: (i) alignment with and realization of the organization's mandate and objectives; (ii enablement of the organization by exploiting opportunities and maximizing benefits; (iii) responsible use of ICT resources; and (iv) appropriate management of ICT-related risks.[6]

B. Importance of ICT governance

17. In recent years, the world has witnessed the rapid growth and ever-increasing importance of ICT. It is hard to imagine an organization operating successfully in the 21st century without a strong ICT infrastructure.

18. The role of ICT has evolved over the past decades from a supporting, back-office function to a key function, enabler and driving force for organizations. It has become a dynamic and strategic asset of an organization for the successful achievement of its mission and goals. ICT is essential to managing transactions, information and knowledge necessary to achieve and sustain an organization's mandate and goals. Hence, organizations are becoming increasingly dependant on a well-functioning ICT infrastructure.

19. At the same time, the expenditure and costs for ICT have grown significantly over the past years. The approximate total ICT costs in the United Nations system organizations range from about 2 to about 13 per cent of the total annual budget of the organizations over 2009 and 2010, with most organizations spending about 4 to 7 per cent of the total annual budget on ICT.[7] Not included in those costs is expenditure for specific ICT initiatives and projects, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, which, as some organizations observed, may be as high as the annual ICT budgets of the organizations. Total ICT costs at the World Food Programme (WFP) were about 3 per cent of the budget in 2009/2010, and at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), approximately 3 and 4 per cent in 2009 and 2010 respectively. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) spent around 2 per cent of their budget on ICT during this period, while the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) spent about 7 per cent (CAD 2.7 million) of its annual budget on ICT in 2009-2010, although major ICT projects were funded through additional funds, in the amount of CAD 640.000 in 2009, and CAD 2.5 million in 2010. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) spent about 3.4 percent (CHF 2.9 million) of its annual budget on ICT in 2010, while an additional CHF 3.2 million was spent on IPSAS implementation during the period 2008-2011.

20. ICT governance is an important factor in generating business value from ICT. A study on ICT governance was conducted by MIT Sloan School of Management's Centre for Information System Research (CISR). The study covered more than 300 enterprises in over 20 countries and concluded that IT business value directly results from effective IT governance. The research indicated that firms with superior IT governance have at least 20 per cent higher profits than firms with poor governance, given the same strategic objectives. [8]

21. Effective ICT governance is a critical factor for successful ICT operation in an organization; it ensures that the organization's ICT is aligned to and supports its strategies and mandate. To this end, the ICT governance mechanism should ensure that the decision-making process on ICT direction, strategy and investments are driven by business so as to enable close alignment of ICT with the organization's business needs. The ICT governance

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[5] A/65/491, para. 24.

[6] For further information on COBIT, see http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/cobit/Pages/Overview.aspx.

[7] Information based on responses to the questionnaire; the figures indicated are aggregates aimed at presenting an overview of the situation. They do not allow for specific conclusions to be drawn in respect of the organizations, bearing in mind the different mandates, structures, activities and operations of the organizations.

[8] See Peter Weill and Jeanne W. Ross, *IT Governance*, Harvard Business School Press, 2004, p. VIII; the research covered the period 1999-2003.

structure and processes should also guarantee the resolution of cross-cutting priorities and requirements at an organization-wide level, which is often a challenge in the United Nations system organizations which have federated and de-centralized ICT architectures and concomitant ICT resource allocations.

22. Effective ICT governance also contributes to better harmonization and coherence with respect to ICT security levels, ICT project management methodologies and generally ICT systems. Finally, an effective ICT governance structure facilitates appropriate awareness of the strategic importance of ICT among managers and staff, and promotes ICT as a strategic tool and enabler for enhancing organizational effectiveness and efficiency and facilitating change management.

C. Basic ICT governance structures and frameworks

23. There is no single ICT governance formula or framework to suit all the United Nations system organizations. Nevertheless, there are agreed common elements that form the basic structure of an ICT governance framework.

24. ICT governance mainly addresses three critical questions: What decisions must be made to ensure appropriate management and use of ICT? Who should make these decisions? How will these decisions be implemented and monitored?

25. The central element is the ICT governance committee or equivalent, composed of business managers providing overall guidance and direction on ICT at the organization-wide level. The committee or board is often supported by a technical committee which provides technical advice and support. The United Nations organizations[9] and those with regional and field offices also have local ICT committees in the organizations' substantive departments and/or regional and country offices.

26. Most organizations also have one or several working group(s) or task force(s) for certain major ICT programmes, for example, the working groups for each of the three strategic ICT programmes at the United Nations.[10] Finally, in addition to standing ICT governance bodies, separate ad hoc governance structures are established for major, large-scale and cross-cutting ICT projects, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation, which may comprise steering committees, project teams, working groups and task forces at different levels, as appropriate.

27. The organization's corporate ICT strategy forms an integral part of the basic ICT governance. Further, the CIO, CTO or Head of the ICT department, the ultimate responsible official for ICT in the organization to whom the CIO or equivalent reports to and Member States in the legislative bodies, i.e. with respect in deciding on and allocating ICT resources through the organization's programme budget preparation process for ICT, play an important role in governing the organization's ICT.

28. Given the various structures and mandates of the United Nations system organizations, ICT governance frameworks, including the ICT governance committee or equivalent, vary across the organizations.

D. ICT governance committees

29. The great majority of organizations have an ICT governance committee or equivalent in place. In most organizations, including the United Nations, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WMO, the ICT governance committee is a separate body composed of officers at the senior and executive levels representing all

[9] The ICT structures at OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNOV, UNODC and UNWRA are governed by the ICT governance framework and the ICT strategy of the United Nations, established by the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) of the United Nations Secretariat.

[10] These are knowledge management, resource management and infrastructure management.

parts of the organization and chaired by an executive manager.[11] Some organizations, such as UNESCO and ICAO, do not have separate ICT governance committees, rather their established management committees deal with ICT matters in addition to other organizational and managerial issues. At UNIDO, the Committee for Change and Organizational Renewal (CCOR), which was established in February 2010, provides strategic direction and oversight with regard to all change undertakings in the organization, including all ICT-related issues and governance frameworks.

30. The most crucial role and function of the ICT governance committee is to ensure alignment of ICT with the organization's business needs. The committee provides a forum and mechanism where business managers from all parts of the organization can meet to discuss ICT requirements and needs at the organization level; it therefore serves as a mechanism for the resolution of competing priorities at that level. This function gains particular importance due to the fact that the great majority of organizations have strong de-centralized and federated ICT structures, with various ICT units located in their major departments and programmes as well as in the organizations' regional and country offices. Without a central governance body dealing with cross-cutting issues at the corporate level, organizations risk having fragmented, inefficient and ineffective ICT structures.

31. At the time of the review, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNESCO were in the process of reforming their ICT governance frameworks. In this context, the organizations also reviewed the composition and terms of reference (TOR) of their ICT governance committees or equivalent, and some departments had not yet established their ICT governance committees or they were not fully operational. Following a review of its ICT governance structure, UNDP is currently revising the TOR of its ICT governance body, the ICT Board.

32. Therefore, in the Inspectors' view, **the executive heads of FAO[12] and UNESCO should ensure that their ICT governance committees or equivalent are established and operational without undue delay, so as to make full use of ICT in sustaining the organizations' mandates and objectives.**

1. Composition of the ICT governance committee

33. ICT governance is the responsibility of senior management. The composition and chairmanship of ICT governance committees or equivalent varies across the United Nations system organizations. Membership usually includes business managers at different levels from various parts of the organization, including regional and country offices, as appropriate. The committee is chaired by an executive officer sometimes the deputy executive head of the organization, in other cases the director of administration or equivalent.

34. The CIO or Head of ICT is also represented on the ICT governance committee, as an ex officio member or as secretary of the committee.[13] This ensures that the CIO can provide administrative and technical support to facilitate the work of the committee; it also ensures that the CIO is informed of the committee's discussions and decisions.

35. The Inspectors noted that the composition of the committees in some organizations does not ensure adequate representation of business managers from all parts of the organization, including from the various

[11] UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN Women and UNU also have a unique ICT governance mechanism, whereby all Atlas agencies are members of the Inter-Agency Atlas Governance Group (IAAG). The Group meets regularly to review common Atlas-related issues, and it is an important aspect of ICT governance in those organizations where strategic issues impacting the Atlas agencies are escalated to the Executive Sponsor Group which comprises Assistant Secretary-Generals of the three core Atlas agencies (UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS).

[12] FAO's new Information Technology and Knowledge Management Governance Framework was approved by its Director-General on July 18th, 2011 and implemented in September 2011.

[13] Practices in the organizations differ: for example at the United Nations and UNHCR, the CIO is an ex officio member of the ICT-EC and the UNHCHR ICT Governance Board, respectively; at WFP, the CIO is a member of the MISSC; while at UNDP, the CTO performs the role of secretary to the UNDP ICT Board.

substantive departments and programmes at headquarters and in regional and country offices for organizations with a strong field presence. The Inspectors also learned that the committee members are not in all organizations business managers at the appropriate senior level.

36. In the Inspectors' view, **it is of utmost importance that all or at least the major business owners from all the major services of the organization, including the regional and country offices, as appropriate, are represented in the organization's ICT governance body, so as to ensure an effective ICT governance committee or equivalent, as a forum where business owners can discuss and provide direction and guidance on ICT at the organization level.**

37. Furthermore, the members of the committee should be business managers at the appropriate senior level, preferably the most senior level. Only then can they adequately represent their departments and programmes, with the authority to present and defend their ICT needs and requirements within the committee, thereby allowing the committee to serve as a forum for discussion and decision-making on ICT matters, including the resolution of competing ICT priorities, requirements and needs at the organization level. That would also ensure that all business managers are regularly updated on ICT issues, as well as on ICT requirements, the status of major ICT initiatives and investments in the organization.

2. Leadership of the ICT governance committee

38. The Inspectors believe that an organization's ICT governance committee should be chaired by an executive manager, preferably a deputy executive head of the organization or an executive officer with similar status, function or authority. This would ensure that inputs and views of the executive management are brought into the discussions and work of the body, and at the same time, executive management will be apprised of and periodically updated on its work, discussions and decisions. This would also contribute to raising awareness at the executive management level of the strategic value and importance of ICT for the organization, and leverage ICT governance at the highest echelons of the organization.

39. The Inspectors consider the ICT governance committees, or equivalent, in the FAO, United Nations, UNHCR, WFP and WMO as good examples. The committees are chaired by the deputy executive heads of the respective organizations and their membership comprises senior managers from all services of the organizations, as well as adequate representation of offices away from headquarters and on the ground. Outside the United Nations system, the IMF also serves as a best practice, as its ICT governance body, the Committee on Business and Information Technology (CBIT) is chaired by one of the Fund's three deputy managing directors and composed of senior management from the different departments. Such chairmanship and composition of the ICT governance committees or equivalent in those organizations ensure the involvement of senior and executive management in ICT issues, help to enhance alignment of ICT with the organizations' respective business needs, including resolving competing ICT needs and priorities against the background of limited resources at the organization-wide level, and, overall, increase recognition of the strategic value of ICT within the organization.

40. The implementation of the following recommendations is expected to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance at the corporate level, based on best practice.

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is composed of the most senior business managers representing all major services of the organization, and chaired by an executive manager, preferably at the level of deputy head of the organization or equivalent.

3. Terms of reference of the ICT governance committee

41. The roles and functions of ICT governance committees vary among the United Nations system organizations. In general, their functions include, inter alia: reviewing and endorsing the ICT strategy; reviewing and providing advice on the investment portfolio and ICT priorities, including IT investment priorities; providing oversight on ICT investments, including changes and post-implementation reviews of key ICT initiatives; providing advice on and endorsing ICT policies, standards and procedures; and providing general advice and guidance on ICT matters.

42. The Inspectors are of the opinion that the ICT governance committee of an organization plays a key role in providing overall guidance and serves as a forum for discussion and consideration of ICT issues at the organization level and on a cross-cutting scale. This is of particular significance, as most organizations have rather decentralized and hybrid ICT structures comprised of both a central IT department as well as IT units located in the various substantive departments and programmes, as well as in regional and field offices.

43. To avoid problems, such as fragmentation, inefficiencies, duplication of work, application of different levels of IT standards – such as security standards –, incompatibility of systems, inter alia, within an organization, a forum or mechanism is needed where business managers from all services of the organization and ICT can meet to discuss and consider ICT matters at the corporate level. This is best achieved through a well-functioning ICT governance committee, whose TOR and role also extend to cross-cutting ICT issues, such as fostering the application of harmonized and common ICT standards, systems compatibility, facilitation of knowledge and sharing of information on ICT. The committee should also serve as a forum where the competing ICT demands of the various departments and programmes could be discussed and considered at the corporate level, so as to allow for prioritization based on the Organization's key ICT priorities and needs. The committee should provide overall guidance on ICT at the organization level, so as to ensure close alignment of ICT with business needs and priorities at the organization level instead of at the departmental level.

44. At the same time, participation of senior business managers in the committee and adequate chairmanship of the body at the executive level is essential. Reference is made to Recommendation 1 above in this respect.

4. Effectiveness of the ICT governance committee

45. In the Inspectors' opinion the following areas are essential and would enhance the functions of the ICT governance committee.

(a) Raising awareness of the strategic value of ICT

46. The strategic value and importance of ICT is not fully recognized, that is the common assertion the Inspectors learned during their meetings and interviews with both ICT and business managers. It was noted to the Inspectors that given the rapidly changing technologies, the complexity of the operating system, the growing dependence on ICT for the organizations work and the high requirement from various users, any decisions on administrative, operational or even programmatic issues have an ICT component and/or implications. Also brought up were the substantial costs for ICT in the organizations, ranging from two to up to 13 per cent of the organizations' annual budgets. It was noted that single major ICT initiatives, such as the implementation of ERP systems, have cost implications of several millions of US dollars each.

47. The Inspectors noted the urgent need to ensure that ICT aspects and elements are fed into the debate and decisions on administrative, managerial or operational issues with ICT implications. This would guarantee close alignment of ICT with business as well as raise the value of ICT as an enabler, strategic asset and tool for improving cost-effectiveness. This could best be achieved through a well-functioning ICT governance committee, serving as a forum where all major business managers can meet to discuss their ICT needs.

48. The Inspectors share those concerns and concur with the said considerations. **The Inspectors are of the view that the ICT governance committee is an excellent vehicle to leverage the profile of ICT within an organization. It would also ensure that business drives ICT, and not the other way around, making ICT a tool for achieving the organization's mandate and goals and for increasing effectiveness and efficiency.**

(b) Increasing the efficiency of the ICT governance committee

49. While most ICT governance committees function properly in general, the Inspectors were informed that inefficiencies do exist in some cases. Improvement is notably needed in the following three areas: (a) frequency of meetings as stipulated in the TOR is not always respected; (b) members would not participate in adequate numbers or would be represented by an alternate, often junior official; (c) documentation for the meetings is sometimes not provided in time or is not adequate – in some cases, the documentation did not contain all the necessary information, in others, it was too comprehensive and bulky or too technical in nature, thereby hampering discussions and decisions within the committee.

50. The Inspectors consider that these issues need to be addressed. They are also of the opinion that, given the essential role that the ICT governance committee plays with regard to effective ICT governance, its functioning and performance should be reviewed and assessed periodically, at least every three years, in order to ensure its effective functioning and to explore ways to further enhance its work.

(c) Strengthening communication between ICT and business

51. Communication and dialogue between ICT and business are of vital importance for any organization wishing to fully tap the potentials of ICT. Such communication is lacking or is inadequate in some organizations. In one organization, the ICT officers expressed satisfaction with the ICT-business communication, asserting that they met the needs and service requirements for business, while several directors (D2 level) stated that they had difficulties communicating with ICT. Although they have fully conveyed their needs to ICT, they were told by ICT officers that their requests and needs could not be met and they would have to take what ICT could offer. As such, they felt that their business needs were not adequately taken into account and neglected.

52. The Inspectors also observed various good examples of successful dialogue between ICT and business. For instance, at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), one sector proposed a major revamp to an application for selling WIPO publications and periodicals online. After a full examination of the project with ICT, it was recognized that the investment could not be offset within a reasonable period by the income generated through the online sales. As a consequence, other mechanisms were explored including using market bookstore chains to sell their books, periodicals and other publications.

53. Close communication and cooperation is particularly essential for major ICT projects requiring extensive input and work from both business and ICT, as in the case of implementing ERP systems. The success of such projects depends, among other factors, especially on a close and effective partnership, interaction and cooperation between the ICT and the business departments. To achieve such close cooperation and communication, the roles, responsibilities of ICT and business must be clear.

54. In the Inspectors' view, **further measures should be taken to strengthening communication between ICT and business. This in turn will facilitate and enhance the work and functioning of the ICT governance committee.**

(d) Promoting information sharing

55. Information sharing, including the sharing of documentation, such as minutes, decisions, as well as communication in general among the ICT governance committee and other standing bodies of the ICT governance framework, such as technical ICT advisory committees, working groups or task forces, was

insufficient in some instances. This has led to the situation whereby the advisory and technical bodies, in some cases, could not properly fulfil their mandate and vice versa.

56. Similarly, there is still a potential for better communication and information sharing among the standing ICT governance bodies, advisory and technical bodies, workings groups with the various ad hoc bodies and working groups established for specific major ICT projects, such as the implementation of ERP systems. Overall, there is also still room for improvement in sharing and communicating the decisions and discussions of the ICT governance committee and the other bodies, as appropriate, to management and users on a continuing and timely basis.

57. In the view of the Inspectors, **the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that all ICT technical and advisory bodies, working groups and task forces are functioning properly, including holding regular meetings with adequate member participation, communicating and sharing the decisions and developments with management and users on a regular and timely basis.**

58. The implementation of the following recommendations would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 2
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is convened regularly with the fullest possible participation of its members, adequate documentation is provided in a timely manner and meeting records are kept, so as to make full use of the committee's work and function.

Recommendation 3
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the function and performance of the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is reviewed and evaluated regularly, but not less than every three years, so as to ensure its effectiveness and facilitate improvement.

E. Chief Information Officer (CIO)

59. The level, reporting line and functions of the most senior ICT officer varies across organizations. Different terminology is also used for the title, such as Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Director or Chief or Head of IT.

60. In some organizations, the CIO, or equivalent, reports to the deputy executive head of the organization (for example FAO, United Nations, ITU, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP), while in others, the CIO reports to the director of administration, or equivalent (for example ICAO, UNEP, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNODC and WMO).

61. Also the function of the CIO, or equivalent, varies among the different organizations also, depending on the organizational and ICT structure of the respective organization. Most organizations have a decentralized and hybrid ICT structure made up of a central IT department and IT units located in the various substantive departments and programmes, as well as in regional and some field offices.

62. In organizations with a more centralized ICT structure and a strong ICT department, the CIO usually has more authority over corporate ICT issues and services provided to the entire organization. In contrast, in some strongly federated organizations (for example IAEA and ITU) or organizations with a strong field presence (such as UNDP and WHO), the function and authority of the CIO are limited to providing basic ICT services and

support in line with the mandate of the organization's ICT department. Specialized ICT services for substantive departments and programmes are provided by the IT units of those departments and programmes. Such units usually report and are accountable to the respective department or programme head (or the head of the relevant regional or field office). Those IT units are also funded through the budgets of the respective departments, programmes, regional or field offices, and not by ICT programme budget of the organization.

63. The particularities of each UN system organization and its specific organizational structures make it difficult to compare in detail the situation, function and TOR of the CIO or equivalent in the organizations. However, the Inspectors made two main observations: the great majority of organizations have – with different degrees – a rather federated and de-centralized ICT structure, which was seen problematic on one hand but also beneficial on the other by the managers and officials interviewed; there have been attempts by some organizations in recent years towards more centralizing their ICT infrastructures, including strengthening their ICT departments.

64. Most organizations have a hybrid structure comprising both a central IT department and IT units located in and serving the organization's substantive departments, programmes and regional and field offices. The officers interviewed indicated that this type of structure creates problems, including fragmentation, inefficiencies, duplication of work, the application of different IT systems and levels of IT standards, for example security standards, within the organization. At the same time, several business mangers indicated that they were not comfortable fully relying on a centralized IT department; they felt that the dedicated IT units know the particular department's specialized IT systems (for example the systems used in human resources or for procurement, supply change, etc.) and have built special knowledge and expertise. As they are closely connected to the departments, they know the particular business needs and can respond in a timely manner to requests. Furthermore, in some organizations (for example IAEA, ITU and WIPO), certain confidentiality requirements and the independence of some departments and programmes require separate IT units and systems.

65. Organizations such as FAO, the United Nations, UNFPA, UNHCR and WFP have made significant efforts and progress towards centralizing their ICT structure over the past years. Basic ICT services (such as IT infrastructure and help-desk services) are ensured throughout the organization by the ICT department; ICT project management procedures and methodology have been harmonized across the organization, including the establishment of an ICT project management function within the ICT department; steps have been taken to harmonize the IT architecture and infrastructure; the application of harmonized standards have been advanced. UNHCR is increasingly outsourcing central, basic IT services to external service providers (private and UN-ICC), which may lead to cost savings. Following the recommendations of its root and branch review, FAO has also moved towards a centralized IT and is assessing the options for more cost effective delivery of basic services, within the limitations of the United Nations protocol on privileges and immunities. The ICT centralization process in those organizations is often accompanied by the establishment of focal points or liaison officers for the major departments and programmes, so as to increase communication and interaction with business, and alignment with the needs of business owners, as has been done in FAO, the United Nations, UNHCR and WIPO.

66. The implementation of ERP systems (UMOJA in the United Nations and ATLAS in UNDP and UNFPA) has further increased the trend towards more centralized ICT, which, in turn, has led to new challenges and risks, relating for example to connectivity and security.

67. ICT centralization in those organizations is an ongoing process. The Inspectors were informed that, in some organizations, there are resource gaps with regard to the new cross-cutting functions of the ICT department, such as harmonizing ICT policy, architecture and systems and setting standards.

68. Other organizations (such as UNICEF) considered a federal model as preferable and the most suitable structure, if supported by a strong regulative environment, formalized matrix management and a strong centralized headquarters function for strategy, standardization, policy and practice. For field-oriented organizations in particular, the ultimate goal is local impact, agility and responsiveness for optimal fulfilment of the core mandate. In this respect, UNICEF is in the process of decentralizing and strengthening a number of its

non-headquarters ICT services, while building a strong centralized headquarters function for strategy, standardization and policy.

69. The Inspectors do not wish to make any specific proposals as to whether organizations should adopt centralized or de-centralized, federated ICT structures. Both models have their pros and cons, as outlined above, and it is rather up to the organizations to decide, taking into account their specific structures, mandates and needs.

70. However, the Inspectors noted that in some organizations the federated systems have led to fragmentation in terms of IT systems, infrastructure and architecture. For instance, in some cases, the IT system was not compatible or able to communicate with each other. Furthermore, in many organizations, different polices and standards are applied throughout the organization, which, for example in the case of IT security standards, can have severe implications for the whole organization. Through the wide use of intranets, extranets, mobile devices, and so on, low IT security levels in one part of an organization may be a threat to other parts of the organization. Finally, the Inspectors noted that information and knowledge sharing on ICT is still weak in several organizations. For instance, there have been cases where a department commissioned the development of specific IT systems which had already been developed and in use in other departments, resulting in duplication of work and inefficient use of resources.

71. The Inspectors believe that **the function and role of the ICT department or the CIO should, under the overall direction and guidance of the ICT governance committee and the officer ultimately responsible for ICT in the Organization, be extended to include cross-cutting functions, such as harmonization of ICT systems, architecture, standards and policies, as well as information and knowledge sharing on ICT within the Organization, as appropriate**. This would strengthen ICT governance at the corporate level, resulting in more effective and efficient ICT.

72. At the same time, given the importance of ICT and the fact that it is closely linked with and indispensable for all major operations and work processes in the organizations, as well as the significant cost of ICT, the CIO, or equivalent, should be at an appropriate level in the organization so as to have direct access to senior and executive management. This would ensure that ICT aspects are considered and fed into the discussions and decisions on all relevant administrative processes, work flows and procedures, and ensure close alignment of ICT with business needs. It would also facilitate leveraging ICT as an enabler and a tool for cost savings and innovation. Good practices in this respect are those organizations, where the CIO, or equivalent, reports to the deputy head of the organization, such as in the United Nations, UNHCR, ITU and WFP.

73. The implementation of the following recommendation would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 4
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the Chief Information Officer (CIO), or equivalent, should be placed at an appropriate senior level with overall responsibilities and authority, and have access to executive management.

III. STRATEGY

74. ICT strategy is a crucial component part of ICT governance. It serves as a blueprint and guideline on the future direction and performance of ICT for the relevant time period (usually 4 to 5 years), providing the foundation for achieving a comprehensive vision by enhancing existing ICT efforts and launching new ICT initiatives that will assist the achievement of the organizations' goals.[14]

[14] See A/62/793, para. 4.

75. Its purpose is to deliver value through the effective use of ICT. An ICT strategy is expected to enhance an organization's effectiveness by aligning ICT with business needs and improving efficiency through timely adoption and use of new technologies. The strategy usually includes ICT key priorities, investments and deliverables for the specified time period in support of and aligned to the organization's mandate, strategic plans and operations. It often also outlines the organization's ICT governance and management framework.

76. The great majority of organizations have ICT strategies. At the time of the review, several organizations (such as FAO,[15] UNESCO and UNIDO) were in the process of preparing and endorsing their ICT strategies in the context of their ongoing reform. UNICEF is in the process of reviewing and revising its current ICT strategy, and aims to finish this work in the first quarter of 2012.

A. Preparation, endorsement and regular update of the ICT strategy

77. Effective ICT governance cannot be achieved without a strategic document outlining the organization's key ICT priorities, investments and deliverables for a medium-term period. The ICT strategy also serves as the central and essential tool and mechanism for ensuring alignment of ICT with the organization's business needs and contains the basic ICT governance frameworks, including the role and function of the ICT governance bodies, technical and advisory bodies and working groups, and hence the modalities and procedures for the ICT-related decision-making process. Therefore, in the Inspectors' view, **those organizations which have not yet adopted an ICT strategy should do so without undue delay.**

78. Not all of the organizations regularly review and update their ICT strategies.

79. In order to be closely aligned with and reflect the organization's mandates, business needs and priorities, the ICT strategy should be periodically reviewed and updated with a view to addressing shifting priorities and changes in the focus of the organization's work or in terms of funding and resources available for ICT, as well as to keep up with technological changes and developments. Good examples of organizations periodically revising and updating their ICT strategies are ILO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNHCR.

80. The process of updating the ICT strategy **should follow the same steps as the process for preparing and endorsing the original strategy. In particular, the full and active involvement of many levels of the organization, including senior and executive managers, business owners and users should be ensured.** This would be best achieved through an extensive formal and informal consultation process of ICT and business.

81. The revised strategy should also be endorsed by the organization's ICT governance committee, or equivalent, and approved by the executive head of the organization or a responsible officer with the relevant delegated authority. Besides ensuring close alignment of ICT with business in strategy and operations, such procedures encourage co-responsibility between ICT and business, and also reinforce the important role that senior and executive management play with regard to defining the ICT strategy. They also further reflect the fact that the ICT strategy updating process is a cross-cutting activity that supports different organizational objectives and functions, and that it is driven by the business owners.

82. Good examples with regard to the strategy preparation process were observed at FAO, WIPO and the United Nations. During the preparation of WIPO's IT strategy, extensive consultations with all departments were conducted through meetings, workshops and information sessions, so as to better understand and obtain inputs on priorities, business needs as well as risks, and on how ICT could help to satisfy those needs and address the risks. At the United Nations, the strategic planning process began with a broad-based exercise aimed at identifying key ICT needs. To this end, a series of strategic planning activities, including executive interviews, an organization-

[15] The FAO Director-General approved the Organization's new IT Strategy on July 18, 2011, which is in the process of being implemented.

wide ICT survey, consultations with permanent missions, technology research and a strategic planning retreat for senior ICT managers were undertaken.[16]

83. At ITU, UNCTAD, UNECE, WFP and WMO, the ICT strategy is endorsed by the executive head of the organization, while at UNHCR it is endorsed by the deputy executive head. In some organizations, such as the United Nations, the ICT strategy has been endorsed by the legislative body; while in other organizations, the ICT strategy is shared and submitted to the legislative body upon request (for example UNICEF and UNFPA) or for information purposes (as at WIPO).

84. The Inspectors consider that **the ICT strategy should be an integral part of the documentation made available to Member States in the legislative bodies, so as to allow them to prepare and take the necessary IT-related decisions.** The strategy should provide in particular for key ICT initiatives and investments with coherent, concrete, prioritized and coordinated projects, including indication of a realistic time frame for implementation, as well as resource implications. Member States should not only be provided with information and resources needs for certain major high-cost ICT projects and investments, but should also be kept abreast of ongoing and planned key ICT priorities, needs, initiatives and investments as outlined in the organization's ICT strategy. In that way, they would be in a position to make well-founded decisions on ICT prioritization and the corresponding resource allocations. This would allow for a more strategic perspective and approach to ICT at the corporate level, and hence reduce fragmentation and enhance alignment and effective and efficient use of resource allocation to ICT in the organizations. It would also ensure involvement by the ultimate business owners, the Member States.

85. The implementation of the following recommendations would enhance accountability and the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 5
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that corporate ICT strategies are prepared, endorsed and periodically reviewed and updated, in order to ensure that they are closely aligned to the organization's business needs and priorities and yield value for their ICT investment.

Recommendation 6
The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to present the corporate ICT strategies to Member States for their information and support.

B. Alignment of the ICT strategy with the organization's strategic plans

86. Not all the ICT strategies are aligned closely enough to the respective organization's medium- and long-term strategic plans. Consequently, these organizations face potential risks that their ICT might not fully sustain and support the business needs and priorities of the organization as identified and outlined in their strategic plans.

87. The Inspectors are of the view that organizations should pay due attention when preparing and updating their ICT strategies that they are closely aligned to their medium- and long-term strategic plans. This would best be done if the ICT strategy makes specific reference to and details how the key ICT priorities, initiatives and

[16] See A/62/793, paras. 6 to 12.

activities of the ICT strategy respond to and support the corresponding strategic goals of the organization concerned, as contained in the overall medium- and long-term strategic plan(s).

88. Good examples include the ICT strategies of UNDP, UNFPA and ITU. For instance, UNFPA's ICT strategy for 2011-2013 specifically links and aligns its ICT strategic goals and objectives to UNFPA's strategic plan, as adopted by its Executive Board. The actions contained in ITU's current ICT strategy is also linked and aligned to its 2009-2012 operational plan for the General Secretariat. UNDP has implemented the practice of formalizing a multi-year ICT Strategy to support the Strategic Plan of the Organization. The ICT Strategy (or IM Strategy) has been endorsed by its Operations Group chaired by the Associate Administrator.

89. The implementation of the following recommendations would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 7
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should make sure that their ICT strategies are closely aligned to the organization's medium- and long-term strategic plans or equivalent, so as to ensure that ICT sustains and supports the organization's business needs and mandates.

C. Implementation and monitoring of the ICT strategy

90. The Inspectors also considered the performance of ICT and the implementation and monitoring of the ICT strategy.

91. In various organizations, the ICT strategy and its complementary documents, such as roadmaps and implementation plans, do not indicate priorities or specific, tangible and time-bound deliverables and performance indicators. Good practices were observed in some organizations (for example UNFPA and ITU) whose ICT strategies set out detailed deliverables and corresponding timelines, which allow close monitoring. Other organizations (such as UNHCR and UNDP) have complemented their ICT strategies with roadmaps (UNDP) or strategic and operating plans (UNHCR) which outline the concrete actions, initiatives and activities to be put in place within given time frames in order to fulfil the ICT strategies.

92. Not all the organizations have translated the key priorities and initiatives identified in the ICT strategy into the organization's or the individual department or unit's ICT budgets and work plans. However, in some organizations good examples where observed. For instance, at WIPO the key priorities and initiatives contained in its ICT strategy have been translated and mapped into the organization's ICT programme budget and the ICT department's biennial work plans.

93. Some organizations do have those mechanisms in place to facilitate implementation and monitoring of their ICT strategies. The absence of such a mechanism impedes the implementation of the ICT strategy and accountability as to which department, office or officer is responsible for the implementation of a certain activity or initiative outlined in the ICT strategy is blurred. Finally, the implementation of the ICT strategy may be hampered by funding gaps, as no or insufficient resources were allocated for certain ICT activities and priorities identified in the strategy in the organization's ICT programme budgets or the budgets of the respective substantive departments and programmes.

94. The implementation of the following recommendation would enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance, as well as controls and compliance.

Recommendation 8
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of their ICT strategies, ensuring that the ICT strategy and its implementation roadmap, deliverables and performance indicators are continuously monitored and regularly reported on to the ICT governance committee, or equivalent.

IV. RESOURCES AND OTHER ICT ISSUES

A. Transparency of ICT costs

95. The Inspectors noted that the great majority of the United Nations system organizations had difficulties indicating their total annual resource requirements for ICT, given their hybrid structure comprised of a central IT department and IT units located in the various substantive departments and programmes as well as in regional and field offices. In particular, strongly decentralized and field-based organizations have difficulty quantifying the total cost of ownership for ICT, as budgets are managed separately by the respective substantive departments and regional and field offices. In the case of UNDP, that amounts to 166 offices around the world. In addition, ICT cost components are often already directly budgeted into the organization's substantive programmes and activities.

96. Further, total ICT costs also include the resource needs for particular medium- and large-scale ICT projects, such as the implementation of ERP systems or other new IT systems, which are often financed through the organization's capital budget over a period of a number of years.

97. Based on the responses to the questionnaire, the approximate total ICT costs in the organizations range from about two to about 13 per cent of the organization's total annual budget; most organizations spending about four to seven per cent of their total annual budget for ICT. This figure does not include expenditure for particular ICT initiatives and projects, such as ERP systems, which could be as high as the recurring annual ICT costs.

98. As indicated above, there is a trend towards a certain centralization of ICT in some organizations. This would lead to more transparency with regard to ICT costs, as such cost would, to a great extent, correspond to the programme budgets of the organizations' ICT departments, and only the costs for major ICT initiatives and projects would have to be added. Furthermore, some organizations have adopted or are in the process of preparing ICT cost catalogues for their basic ICT services. This will also enhance transparency and clarity regarding the cost of ICT. A similar exercise is currently underway at the HLCM and the ICTN on a system-wide level. Finally, the implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) will further assist the United Nations agencies with identifying their IT costs.

99. In the Inspectors' view, **effective ICT governance at the corporate level cannot be achieved without a clear picture of the total ICT costs incurred by the organization.** More detailed information on ICT costs, including, at a minimum, the total annual ICT costs incurred, the portions of recurring and ad hoc annual ICT costs, details and a breakdown of costs for certain ICT activities, specific systems and projects, the cost implications of proposed future IT investment and initiatives, is needed to ensure effective ICT governance based on a strategic, results-based and cost effective approach. Internal and external decision-makers must have information on cost implications so as to better take into consideration those cost factors in their decision-making and prioritization process. The current situation also impairs accountability and transparency of ICT governance.

100. In this respect, the Inspectors also refer to recommendation 1 of a previous JIU report on ICT hosting services in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2008/5), which proposed that "The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should work with HLCM towards defining a consistent method of recording ICT

expenditures/costs to facilitate cost-benefit analysis of ICT services." The Inspectors acknowledge, in this respect, the work done in some organizations, as well as in the HLCM and the ICTN on the costing of ICT services. However, they encourage said organizations as well as the HLCM and the ICTN to conclude and finalize their work without undue delay.

101. The implementation of the following recommendation would enhance accountability and the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 9
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should strengthen their efforts in keeping track of the ICT costs in their organizations, including the total annual recurring and ad hoc ICT costs, as well as details on the main cost elements.

B. ICT investments

102. The decision-making process on ICT investments varies across the organizations. In most organizations, the decision-making process depends on the financial volume of the projects: for small ICT projects, the decision-making authority would be the CIO and/or the heads of substantive departments or regional or field offices; medium-size projects would need endorsement from the head of the department and, in some cases, the organization's ICT governance committee, as well as the approval of senior managers and/or the highest authority on ICT or the head of the organization; for very large and cost-intensive projects, ad hoc project governance structures, comprising steering and management committees, working groups and so on have to be established, and funding for those projects would be sought from Member States or they may be funded from the organizations' capital budgets.

103. Most organizations have established project management methodologies, typically based on and following Prince2. However, those methodologies are often not consistently applied across the organization, given the decentralized and federated ICT structures of most of the organizations. In some cases, different methodologies are in place and used by different organizational departments and units within the same organization. This results in the application of different assessment and decision criteria for ICT investments/projects, as well as different approval and quality assurance requirements, requisites for technical specifications, such as ICT security standards/requirements, among others.

104. Therefore, in the Inspectors' view, **the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should make an effort to further develop and endorse ICT project investment methodologies and guidelines applicable to all the departments and services of their respective organizations.** The guidelines should, in particular, include the requirements for submitting business cases for all IT project proposals, supported by the adequate documentation, and including a lifecycle cost-benefit analysis and outlining funding needs and sources. They should also include certain project investment assessment criteria to guide the selection process, so as to allow for a fair and transparent process, as well as the requirement to indicate how the proposed project would support the overall corporate ICT strategic goals. The guidelines should also include provisions on project implementation and a mandatory post-implementation review of major IT projects and investments.

105. In most of the organizations, the Inspectors noted the absence of a central project portfolio, listing all the ICT projects implemented within the organization. This impedes decision-making on ICT investments and priorities at the corporate level, favouring ad hoc rather than strategic decision-making, and could also lead to duplication or incompatibility of systems, providing grounds for inefficiencies.

106. **A project management office or function should be established in the ICT department, taking into account existing resources, to assist in the administration of the implementation of project methodologies**

and guidelines, as appropriate. Furthermore, **a central project portfolio, comprising all ICT projects implemented within the organization should be established and regularly updated.**

107. Good examples of the above were observed at FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations, WIPO and WFP. For instance, the United Nations has established a central PMO within OICT's Strategic Management Service, aimed at ensuring alignment of ICT investments with organizational priorities. The three primary functions of the PMO that span the full lifecycle of a project, from business justification through benefits realization, include enterprise portfolio management (EPM), project management support and project benefits assessment. Similar functions have also been established at WFP and WIPO. Those organizations are in the process of establishing an ICT project portfolio to keep track of existing ICT infrastructure and systems.

C. ICT performance and oversight

108. Effective ICT governance also requires performance management processes and structures to ensure timely, objective and measurable performance monitoring of ICT operation and projects, and their alignment to business needs and priorities.

109. COBIT ME.4.6 control objective[17] requires confirming that (i) agreed-upon IT goals have been met or exceeded; (ii) progress toward such goals meet expectations; and (iii) when objectives have been missed or progress is not expected, management takes remedial action. It also provides for reporting on relevant portfolios, programmes and IT performance to enable senior management and governing bodies to review progress with regard to meeting identified goals. Measuring IT performance should be a key concern of business and IT executives, as it demonstrates the effectiveness and added business value of IT.

110. ICT performance measurement takes place at different levels in the organizations and through various mechanisms. The performance of the central ICT department and other ICT units is measured through common performance measurement tools in place in the organizations. Most organizations also conduct periodic ICT satisfaction surveys, and post-implementation reviews are conducted for certain major ICT investments and projects.

111. However, in some organizations there is a lack of ICT performance assessment at the organization level, in terms of delivering added value as expected and outlined in the organization's ICT strategy, and hence ensuring that ICT is closely aligned to and sustaining the organization's business needs and priorities at the corporate level.

112. In various organizations, the key deliverables and priorities, as identified and outlined in the ICT strategy, are not or are inadequately reflected in the TOR or job descriptions, and the corresponding performance evaluations of relevant staff, in both the central ICT department and the other ICT units and programmes of the organizations. The Inspectors are of the view that **the terms of reference and performance assessment for staff should include and be linked to the key corporate ICT priorities and needs as outlined in the organization's ICT strategy, so as to ensure close alignment of the ICT function and services and facilitate monitoring of ICT performance in this respect.** Reference is also made to recommendation 7 above.

113. The Inspectors were informed that, in particular, regular post-implementation or peer reviews of ICT investments and projects are not regularly conducted. This was considered a major drawback, as it did not allow the assessment of whether the objectives linked to the IT investments were achieved or whether the viability of the relevant related cost-benefit analyses and estimations were correct. It also impedes learning lessons for future ICT projects. This problem was also highlighted in many of the audit and evaluation reports reviewed by the Inspectors.

[17] For further information on COBIT, see http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/cobit/Pages/Overview.aspx.

114. The implementation of the following recommendation would enhance controls and compliance as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT governance.

Recommendation 10
The executive heads of the United Nations system organization should ensure that post-implementation reviews of major ICT investments and projects are conducted in line with the organization's ICT investment methodologies and policies.

115. ICT is subject to the organization's internal and external oversight function. The Inspectors noted that the organization's ICT operations were adequately covered and subject to regular audits and evaluations.

116. However, the Inspectors also noted that the oversight recommendations were not always fully implemented and in a timely manner. They therefore urge the executive heads of the organizations to speed up their implementation. Furthermore, the Inspectors consider that it would be useful for the ICT governance committee to periodically include in its agenda the main issues raised in the ICT audit and evaluation reports of its work, in particular those having an organization-wide dimension and impact.

D. ICT risk management

117. The United Nations system organizations are at different stages of ICT risk management, with most of them either in the process of preparing policy and framework documents or undertaking pilot or first-phase exercises. ICT risk management is either led by the ICT departments, or in several organizations, it is part of the organization-wide implementation of enterprise risk management (ERM).

118. Some organizations (such as ITU, UNDP, WFP, and WIPO) have already established risk registers which also cover ICT risks. However, most (e.g. FAO, UNICEF and WMO) are still in the process of developing ERM models and methodologies. Besides the information gathered in this review, the recent JIU report on the implementation of enterprise risk management (ERM) in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2010/4) also provides a good overview of the topic.

119. Although progress has been made in ICT risk management, there is still room for improvement, as identified during the meetings with officers and as noted in the various internal and external audit and evaluation reports.

120. In the Inspectors' view, effective ICT risk management should provide for periodic risk assessments at both the strategic global level and the system- specific levels, as well as for major future projects. Risk assessments of the ICT structures in regional and country offices should also be undertaken. The **United Nations system organizations should establish and regularly update ICT risk registers or catalogues covering all parts of the respective organization.** Finally, risk assessments could serve as the basis for formulating IT security strategies and policies as well as business-continuity and disaster-recovery plans.

121. Information on ICT risk and ICT risk assessments and catalogues should be considered by the ICT governance committees, insofar as they concern risks with implications for ICT at the organization level, such as those linked to the implementation of a new ERP system, for example, or to other major ICT systems used throughout the organization.

E. IT security

122. ICT security plays an increasingly important role given technological development, the widespread use and the indispensable nature of ICT in the organizations. ICT security is of particular importance to the United Nations system organizations as most of them (in particular United Nations, IAEA and WIPO) handle very sensitive and confidential information.

123. The level and quality of ICT security management varies across organizations, although most follow ISO 27001 and ISO 9001. Their IT security activities include preparing and updating ICT risk registers; conducting information security architecture reviews; vulnerability assessments of major applications and systems; IT awareness training; mandatory information security compliance/risk assessment questionnaire and workshops for ICT managers. UNDP also extends these activities to their regional and country offices.

124. However, not all the organizations have adopted ICT security policies and manuals or they are not applied consistently within the organization, resulting in different ICT security levels and policies within the same organization. This is the case, in particular, in organizations with a strong decentralized ICT structure, and those with regional and country offices. Given the strong inter-connectivity of modern ICT systems, different ICT security levels and policies applied in different parts of a same organization result in security threats for the entire organization. Furthermore, the roles, responsibilities and accountability of staff (IT and non-IT) as well as non-staff (e.g. external service providers) are not always clear. Finally, in various organizations where ICT security policies have been adopted, they are not adequately communicated to all staff and appropriate training is not provided to IT and non-IT staff.

125. Hence, in the Inspectors' view, **the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that an ICT security strategy, in the form of a stand-alone document or as part of the corporate ICT strategy, is prepared and regularly updated.** In this regard, new IT security risks, for example, through various technologies and systems such as mobile devices, Blackberries, Internet, ERP systems, and so on, should be taken into account. The ICT security strategy or polices and manual should also clarify the roles, responsibilities and accountability of staff with respect to IT security. The policies should be communicated to staff and relevant training should be provided, as appropriate.

126. Regular ICT security reports should be prepared by the relevant officers in the ICT department and submitted to senior management as well as to the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, for consideration and action.

F. ICT business continuity and disaster recovery

127. Most organizations have adopted policies and plans on business continuity and disaster recovery and some organizations are in the process of doing so. A few organizations (UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations) have already conducted tests and simulations of their systems.

128. The Inspectors noted that technological changes, such as the use of ERP systems and cloud computing, poses new and additional business continuity risks (including to connectivity and safe backup hosting sites), which need to be addressed and taken into account when preparing, implementing and testing business continuity and disaster recovery plans. In this context, some officers interviewed proposed looking into the role of UN-ICC as the service provider for many United Nations system organizations, and also into possibilities and ways of increasing cooperation among United Nations organizations in this area, for instance by exploring the possibilities of organizations serving as mutual safe backup sites for each other, as already practiced among some of the New York- and Geneva-based organizations.

129. In the Inspectors' view, **the executive heads of the United Nations organizations should include business continuity and disaster recovery risks in their ICT risk assessments and registers, and speed up the**

adoption and implementation of their respective plans, which should be updated and tested periodically. Regular reports should be made to the ICT governance committee on the adoption and implementation of the organizations' business continuity and disaster recovery plans, insofar as they pertain to ICT issues.

V. SYSTEM-WIDE ICT COOPERATION

130. The work of the CEB ICT Network (ICTN) was considered useful and helpful overall for enhancing ICT coordination, cooperation and coherence within the United Nations system organizations. Indeed, the organizations would, in particular, benefit from the work of some of the ICTN working groups, such as those on ICT security and ICT cost categories.

131. At the same time, some organizations argued that the Network's discussions do not always lead to concrete outcomes and decisions, and that not all the organizations are in a position to effectively implement its proposals, recommendations and decisions. It was also mentioned that the cost of attending the Network's semi-annual meetings were fairly high for some organizations in relation to the benefits obtained. Finally, some officers expressed concern at the number of formal and informal ICT networks, in addition to the ICTN, such as local ICT networks at the different duty stations, the UN-ICC working group, among others, proposing that their number be reduced in order to avoid duplication and reduce participation costs. Other organizations indicated that the field-level ICT coordination bodies were relevant, useful and supportive mechanisms, and that it was at the prerogative of the individual United Nations Country Management Teams concerned to decide and provide guidance on how best to utilize those structures effectively.

132. In order to leverage the ICTN, some officers interviewed proposed that the role and work of the ICTN could be enhanced, if the CEB provided clear guidance, including through asking for and requesting specific outputs in the ICT area identified as common problems for the majority of the United Nations system organizations. It was also noted that information sharing on common ICT issues at the ICTN level could be further improved.

133. The Inspectors share these considerations. The HLCM, representing business and management, should include on its agenda strategic and ICT issues, such as ICT costs, ICT procurement, implementation of ERP systems, inter-connectivity among IT systems, IT security, the use of new technologies, that are common to and that affect all the United Nations system organizations. The respective discussions and decisions in the HLCM could then serve as guidance and provide overall direction to the ICTN and its work. At the same, this would encourage discussion of strategic ICT issues from a business perspective at a system-wide level in the HLCM and facilitate communication and interaction among ICT and business at that level.

134. The implementation of the following recommendation would enhance ICT coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system.

Recommendation 11
The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the CEB, should streamline the CEB ICT Network by identifying and focusing on common ICT issues, and providing clear guidance to the network in order to improve cooperation and coordination among the United Nations system organizations.

Annex I

ICT governance committees, or equivalent, in the United Nations system organizations

Annex I is published on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) together with the report.

Annex II

ICT strategies in the United Nations system organizations

Annex II is published on the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) together with the report.

Annex III

Chief Information Officers (CIO), or equivalent, in the United Nations system organizations

Organization	Title	Grade	Reporting Line	Functions
United Nations	**Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO)**	ASG	The CITO is accountable to the Secretary-General, and reports to the Deputy Secretary-General who has been delegated the responsibility for oversight of the Secretariat-wide ICT portfolio of activities	The CITO is provided with sufficient central authority and resources to oversee ICT activities in the United Nations Secretariat worldwide (*). The CITO is responsible for the overall direction and performance of ICT activities in the organization. Key functions and responsibilities include: (a) providing strategic vision and leadership in the management of information and technology for the global Secretariat, (b) acting as the principal representative of the Secretary-General with regard to technology and information management; (c) providing advice to the executive committee on information and communications technology, in the capacity as permanent member of the committee; (d) promulgating ICT policies and standards; (e) participating in the ICT steering committees which guide major ICT initiatives; (f) acting as the Head of OICT (responsible for carrying out strategic ICT activities and providing shared services affecting the entire organization); (g) monitoring and improving the effectiveness of the ICT management framework.
UNCTAD *	**Chief, Information Technology Support Section**	P5	The ITSS Chief reports to the Head of Administration and Chief Resource Management Service	
UNODC *	**Chief, Information Technology Service**	D1	The ITS Chief reports to the Director of the Division of Management at UNOV/UNODC. Technically, the ITS Chief also reports to the CITO of the United Nations	
UNEP *	**ICT Advisor**	P5	The ICT Advisor reports to the Director of the Office of Operations in the Executive Office	
UN-Habitat *				

UNHCR	**CIO & Director Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST)**	D2	The CIO reports directly to the Executive Head (High Commissioner)	The CIO chairs the ICT Business Owners Committee (ICTBOC) that is attended by Deputy Directors to ensure ICT investments in UNHCR are well governed and system-wide systems are developed as far as possible. HQ and field investment is being aligned so that projects are visible and investment can be tracked. CIO provides support in running the ICTGB which is chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner and attended by Divisional and Bureau Directors. Major investment programs are brought here for approval or status update.
UNRWA *	**Chief Information Systems Division**	P5	The Chief reports to the Director of Administrative Support (D1)	
UNDP	**The UNDP Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and Director of the Office of Information Systems and Technology (OIST)**	D2		The CTO oversees ICT-related United Nations reform initiatives and represents UNDP in various inter-agency fora, oversees ICT governance, and implements the IM strategy. The CTO provides technical leadership in the procurement, development, management and enhancement of ICT systems and services, provides technical support for mission-critical enterprise ICT systems, implements fraud prevention controls, and enables the appropriate assessment and management of ICT risk.
UNFPA	**Chief, Management Information Services**	D1	The Chief reports directly to the Deputy Executive Director, Management.	The Chief strategizes, manages and supervises ICT-related initiatives, activities and operations globally, including ERP in UNFPA. The Chief is responsible for creating an enabling environment with the integration of ICT into development and operational business processes leading to effective and efficient programme delivery. The Chief ensures that the enabled environment stretches globally within UNFPA and serves all staff, offices and activities with the adoption of UNFPA-specific ICT standards. The Chief ensures business continuity of UNFPA operations through maintenance of fully functioning ICT systems and disaster recovery plans.
UNICEF	**Director Information Technology Solutions and Services (ITSS)**	D2	The ITSS Director reports to the Deputy Executive Director, Management (ASG)	The Director has an authority span equivalent to an organizational CIO and CTO. He/She initiates the majority of substantive undertakings.
WFP	**Chief Information Officer (CIO)**	D2	The CIO reports to the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer (COO) for Operations.	The functions of the ICT Director and CIO are as follows: • Formulate overall strategies and policies for ICT and ensure properly implementation and compliance; • Advise management on all ICT issues and initiatives; • Oversee the development of a global ICT strategy to provide cost-effective access to information; • Manage the planning, administration and execution of all system maintenance and enhancement activities; • Develop strategies to contain the cost of ownership of technologies and monitor global ICT services expenditure; • Establish and consolidate relationships with partner United Nations agencies and other international bodies; and • Initiate and participate in private-sector partnership arrangements.

UNOPS				
ILO	**Director, Information Technology and Communications Bureau (ITCOM)**		The ITCOM Director reports to the Executive Director of Management and Administration Sector (MAS)	The current vacancy announcement for Director of ITCOM includes new functions and duties, including strategic functions concerning IT.
FAO	**Chief Information Officer (CIO)**		The CIO reports to the Deputy Director-General (Operations)	The CIO is the principal adviser to the organization's senior management and the Director of the Division providing IT services with regard to information technology and systems, including strategy, architecture, governance, policy and operations.
UNESCO	**Chief Information Officer (CIO)**		The CIO reports to the Assistant Director-General for Administration (ADG/ADM)	The CIO will be responsible for all substantive and operational needs relating to the organization's knowledge and information management systems (KIMS). This will involve developing, maintaining and monitoring the implementation of an effective KIMS strategy. The CIO will serve as the principal advisor to senior management with regard to knowledge and information management and ICT systems and systems integration, and will lead innovation, increase operational impact and optimize investment in UNESCO's information and communication technology platforms.
ICAO	**Chief of ICT Section**	P 5	The Chief of ICT reports to the Director or the Deputy Director of ADB.	No CIO role and function has been established at ICAO. The Chief of ICT is the highest graded IT professional in ICAO and is the decision-making authority on technical and operational IT issues.
WHO	**Director, ITT**			
UPU				
ITU	**Chief, Information Services Department**	D1	The Chief is accountable and reports to the SG or the DSG	
WMO	**Chief, Information Technology Division**	P5	The Chief is accountable and reports to the Director, Resource Management Department (D2)	
IMO	**Deputy Director/ Head IT & IS**	D1	The holder of this post reports to the Director, Administrative Division or the ASG (D2)	
WIPO				

UNIDO	**Chief, Information, Communications Management**	P5	The Chief reports to the Managing Director, Programme Support and General Management Division (D2)	
UNWTO	**ICT Programme Coordinator**	P4	The Coordinator reports to the Director of Administration and Finance	
IAEA	**Chief Information Officer (CIO), Director, MTIT**	D	The CIO reports to the Deputy Director-General, Management	The CIO is responsible for ICT operational and policy issues. The CIO reports to the Secretariat executive leadership on issues related to the Agency's information strategy, security, planning, capital investments, policies and standards.

* UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNOV/UNODC and UNWRA are governed by the ICT governance framework of the United Nations established by the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) of the United Nations Secretariat and follow the ICT strategy of the United Nations.

Annex IV

Overview of action to be taken by participating organizations on JIU recommendations JIU/REP/2011/9

		Intended impact	CEB*	United Nations, its funds and programmes												Specialized agencies and IAEA												
				United Nations**	UNCTAD	UNODC	UNEP	UN-HABITAT	UNHCR	UNRWA	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	WFP	UNOPS	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	UPU	ITU	WMO	IMO	WIPO	UNIDO	UNWTO	IAEA
Report	For action		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	For information		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation 1		**e**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 2		**e**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 3		**e**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 4		**e**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 5		**a**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 6		**a**		L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Recommendation 7		**e**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 8		**d**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

Legend: **L:** Recommendation for decision by legislative organ
E: Recommendation for action by executive head
☐ : Recommendation does not require action by this organization

Intended impact: **a:** enhanced accountability **b:** dissemination of best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** enhanced controls and compliance
e: enhanced effectiveness **f:** significant financial savings **g:** enhanced efficiency **o:** other

* Action to be taken by the Chairman of the CEB.
** Covers all entities listed in ST/SGB/2002/11, other than UNCTAD, UNODC, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNRWA.

		Intended impact	CEB*	United Nations, its funds and programmes													Specialized agencies and IAEA													
				United Nations**	UNCTAD	UNODC	UNEP	UN-HABITAT	UNHCR	UNRWA	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	WFP	UNOPS	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	UPU	ITU	WMO	IMO	WIPO	UNIDO	UNWTO	IAEA
Report	For action		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	For information		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation 9	**a**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 10	**d**		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 11	**c**	E																											

Legend: **L:** Recommendation for decision by legislative organ
E: Recommendation for action by executive head
☐: Recommendation does not require action by this organization

Intended impact: **a:** enhanced accountability **b:** dissemination of best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** enhanced controls and compliance
e: enhanced effectiveness **f:** significant financial savings **g:** enhanced efficiency **o:** other

* Action to be taken by the Chairman of the CEB.
** Covers all entities listed in ST/SGB/2002/11, other than UNCTAD, UNODC, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNRWA.

United Nations A/67/119/Add.1

General Assembly

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Sixty-seventh session
Item 136 of the preliminary list*
Joint Inspection Unit

Information and communications technology governance in United Nations system organizations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Information and communications technology governance in United Nations system organizations" (JIU/REP/2011/9).

* A/67/50.

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Summary

The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Information and communications technology governance in United Nations system organizations" aims at promoting effective information and communications technology (ICT) governance through comparative analysis of the different ICT governance frameworks, practices and processes in the various United Nations system organizations with a view to identifying best practices and lessons learned. The report includes 11 recommendations that seek to strengthen the ICT governance frameworks of the United Nations system organizations regarding the role, composition and effectiveness of the organizations' ICT governance committee, or equivalent; the organizations' ICT strategy, its alignment with business needs and implementation; the role and responsibilities of the Chief Information Officer, or equivalent; ICT risk management; ICT performance and oversight; and ICT investments.

The present note sets out the views of organizations of the United Nations system on the recommendations provided in the report. The views of the system have been consolidated on the basis of inputs provided by member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which welcomed the report and supported its analysis and conclusions.

I. Introduction

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Information and communications technology governance in United Nations system organizations" aims at promoting effective information and communications technology (ICT) governance through comparative analysis of the different ICT governance frameworks, practices and processes in the various organizations of the United Nations system, with a view to identifying best practices and lessons learned. The report includes 11 recommendations that seek to strengthen the ICT governance frameworks of the organizations of the United Nations system regarding the role, composition and effectiveness of the organizations' ICT governance committee, or equivalent; the organizations' ICT strategy, its alignment with business needs and implementation; the role and responsibilities of the Chief Information Officer, or equivalent; ICT risk management; ICT performance and oversight; and ICT investments.

II. General comments

2. Organizations of the United Nations system largely support the analysis and conclusions of the report and note that it provides useful benchmarking information and advocates a "best practice" approach to ICT governance. Most organizations are pleased to note that the majority of the recommendations contained in the report are already implemented and plans are under way to ensure the implementation of the other relevant recommendations of the report. Agencies further express appreciation for the high degree of collaboration that took place between the Joint Inspection Unit and the heads of ICT at the participating organizations, noting that the Unit participated in two meetings of the Information and Communications Technology Network of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) High-level Committee on Management.

III. Specific comments on recommendations

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is composed of the most senior business managers representing all major services of the organization, and chaired by an executive manager, preferably at the level of deputy head of the organization or equivalent.

3. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is convened regularly with the fullest possible participation of its members, adequate documentation is

provided in a timely manner and meeting records are kept, so as to make full use of the committee's work and function.

4. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the function and performance of the ICT governance committee, or equivalent, is reviewed and evaluated regularly, but not less than every three years, so as to ensure its effectiveness and facilitate improvement.

5. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the Chief Information Officer (CIO), or equivalent, should be placed at an appropriate senior level with overall responsibilities and authority, and have access to executive management.

6. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that corporate ICT strategies are prepared, endorsed and periodically reviewed and updated, in order to ensure that they are closely aligned to the organization's business needs and priorities and yield value for their ICT investment.

7. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to present the corporate ICT strategies to Member States for their information and support.

8. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation. They note that this is a well-established practice at most of their legislative and governing bodies.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should make sure that their ICT strategies are closely aligned to the organization's medium- and long-term strategic plans, or equivalent, so as to ensure that ICT sustains and supports the organization's business needs and mandates.

9. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of their ICT strategies, ensuring that the ICT strategy and its implementation road map, deliverables and performance indicators are continuously monitored and regularly reported on to the ICT governance committee, or equivalent.

10. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation.

Recommendation 9

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should strengthen their efforts in keeping track of the ICT costs in their organizations, including the total annual recurring and ad hoc ICT costs, as well as details on the main cost elements.

11. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation. Agencies note that an initiative within the ICT Network of the United Nations system seeks to standardize the methodology used by agencies to calculate ICT costs.

Recommendation 10

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that post-implementation reviews of major ICT investments and projects are conducted in line with the organization's ICT investment methodologies and policies.

12. Organizations of the United Nations system support and welcome this recommendation, although many suggest that further clarity regarding the precise point when many projects are concluded, noting that ICT projects have a substantial business operational component.

Recommendation 11

The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the CEB, should streamline the CEB ICT Network by identifying and focusing on common ICT issues, and providing clear guidance to the Network in order to improve cooperation and coordination among the United Nations system organizations.

13. The Secretary-General, as Chair of CEB, welcomes this recommendation. However, within the context of the recommendation, agencies noted, in paragraph 131 of the report, a reference to the number of inter-agency, ICT-related entities, among them a "United Nations-ICC working group". Agencies note that no such entity exists; they suggest that the report may have been referring to the Management Committee of the International Computing Centre (ICC), which is not an inter-agency working group but the governance body of ICC and is not under the authority of the inter-agency mechanisms.

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General Assembly

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Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 76 (a) of the preliminary list*
Oceans and the law of the sea

Report on the work of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea at its thirteenth meeting

Letter dated 8 June 2012 from the Co-Chairs of the Consultative Process addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/231 of 24 December 2011, we were appointed as the Co-Chairs of the thirteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

We have the honour to submit to you the attached report on the work of the Informal Consultative Process at its thirteenth meeting, which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 May to 1 June 2012. The outcome of the meeting consists of our summary of issues and ideas discussed during the meeting.

In line with past practice, we kindly request that the present letter and the report of the Informal Consultative Process be circulated as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea".

(*Signed*) Milan Jaya **Meetarbhan**
Don **MacKay**
Co-Chairs

* A/67/50.

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Thirteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

(29 May-1 June 2012)

Co-Chairs' summary of discussions[1]

1. The thirteenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea ("Informal Consultative Process") was held from 29 May to 1 June 2012 and, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 65/37 A and 66/231, focused its discussions on the topic entitled "Marine renewable energies".

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of 75 States, 10 intergovernmental organizations and other bodies and entities and 6 non-governmental organizations.[2]

3. The following supporting documentation was available to the meeting: (a) report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/67/79 and Corr.1); and (b) format and annotated provisional agenda of the meeting (A/AC.259/L.13).

Agenda items 1 and 2
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. The two Co-Chairs, Don MacKay (New Zealand) and Milan Jaya Meetarbhan (Mauritius), appointed by the President of the General Assembly, opened the meeting.

5. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and Stephen Mathias, Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, made opening remarks.

6. The meeting adopted the format and annotated provisional agenda and approved the proposed organization of work.

Agenda item 3
General exchange of views

7. The general exchange of views took place at the plenary meetings on 29 and 31 May. The discussions held on the topic of focus at the plenary meetings and within the panels are reflected in paragraphs 8 to 59 below.

8. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/67/79 and Corr.1). They recalled that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("the Convention") provided the framework for all activities in the oceans and seas, including in relation to

[1] The summary is intended for reference purposes only and not as a record of the discussions.

[2] A list of participants is available on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm.

marine renewable energies. It was considered timely and relevant for the Informal Consultative Process to discuss the topic of marine renewable energies, which delegations considered as an untapped source of energy.

9. A call was made for States to decide and plan their marine renewable energies development goals bearing in mind the rights and obligations of States under the Convention. Many delegations emphasized the need to strengthen international cooperation to address challenges in the development of marine renewable energies in accordance with the current international legal framework. Capacity-building as well as the transfer of technology were considered essential elements of international cooperation and coordination. In this regard, some delegations indicated that the report of the Secretary-General could have placed more emphasis on Part XIV of the Convention.

10. Many delegations noted that the General Assembly had declared 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. The unbalanced state of development of marine renewable energies between developed and developing countries was pointed out by some delegations. Several delegations viewed access to modern affordable energy services in developing countries, in particular small island developing States, as essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development. Others emphasized the importance of access to energy as a means of promoting equitable and durable economic development, as well as peace, stability and social justice.

11. In particular, the development of marine renewable energies could foster increased energy security, generate employment and play a role in mitigating the impacts of climate change. At the same time, the importance of assessing and studying the impacts of marine renewable energies, including on the marine environment, was stressed by several delegations.

Area of focus: marine renewable energies

12. In accordance with the annotated agenda, discussions in the Panel were structured around three segments: (a) marine renewable energies: types, uses and role in sustainable development; (b) ongoing or planned marine renewable energies projects/work at the global and regional levels; and (c) opportunities and challenges in the development of marine renewable energies, including for cooperation and coordination. The segments were launched by presentations from panellists, followed by interactive discussions.

13. Many delegations highlighted the timeliness and critical importance of the topic of focus, and it was noted that marine renewable energies should feature prominently in the discussions and outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference). It was also observed that the topic of focus was fitting for discussion in the year that marked the thirtieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention. The importance of the topic of focus for developing countries was particularly emphasized.

1. Marine renewable energies: types, uses and role in sustainable development

(a) Panel presentations

14. Alain Piquemal, Doyen, Institut du Droit de la Paix et du Développement, Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis (France), and member of the Governmental

Council of the Sea (Monaco), presented an overview of the current implementation frameworks for marine renewable energies. He focused, in particular, on the legal, economic and financial instruments adopted by States to foster environmental protection, international cooperation and sustainable investments in the sector. Mr. Piquemal suggested that the ultimate objectives of these frameworks should be to secure investments, protect the environment, foster financial incentives and increase efforts in research and development, as well as to combat climate change and create economic wealth and employment.

15. John Huckerby, Chairman, Executive Committee, International Energy Agency Implementing Agreement on Ocean Energy Systems, focused on the development and distribution of marine renewable energy globally. He noted that wave and tidal energy was distributed mostly at mid to high latitudes, while ocean thermal energy conversion had more potential at tropical latitudes. He stressed that ocean energy technologies, except for tidal energy, were still immature and that many remained at the research and development stage, in particular, submarine geothermal, ocean thermal energy conversion and salinity gradient. In addition, he noted the major markets for marine renewable, including utility-scale electricity generation, off-grid energy generation for remote communities and the production of drinking water.

16. Jay Batongbacal, Assistant Professor, College of Law, University of the Philippines, spoke on renewable ocean energies and distributive justice in sustainable development. He pointed out that States should not only aim to promote marine renewable energies that were environmentally safe, but also ensure that the development and use of such energies led to greater social equity. Mr. Batongbacal identified equitable access to energy sources, distribution of benefits and costs and stakeholder participation in decision-making as the core elements of the concept of ecological social justice.

(b) Plenary and panel discussions

17. The meeting was informed of the launch, in November 2011, of the International Energy and Climate Initiative (Energy+), an international voluntary partnership established to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Secretary-General's "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative. Energy+ was also designed as a knowledge-sharing forum and an opportunity to create momentum for policy, technical and financial support.

18. Several delegations referred to the heavy reliance on the import of fossil fuels by small island developing States and associated high transportation costs. It was suggested that this situation illustrated the need for these States to develop alternative domestic renewable energy sources.

19. A view was expressed that the Convention was a clear expression of the intent and a fundamental instrument to achieve distributive justice in the use of the world's oceans by developing and developed States. It was suggested that distributive justice as a core principle of sustainable development aimed at addressing, inter alia, access to resources and the distribution of benefits and burdens, should also apply to marine renewable energies.

20. Several delegations stated that the scope of the concept of marine renewable energies should be clarified. It was indicated that the meeting would take a broad

approach to the topic and consider both renewable energies that are derived from the oceans and those sources of energy that are located directly in the oceans.

21. With regard to the types and uses of marine renewable energies, several delegations drew particular attention to the advances in the offshore wind power market in the past two decades and the promises of tidal range technologies. Some delegations highlighted that tidal power stations with barrage dams had been in use since 1966. It was noted, however, that wave power technology was still far from reaching commercial potential. Several delegations also observed that, while ocean thermal energy conversion was particularly relevant in tropical latitudes, the technology had mostly been developed by countries in northern latitudes. In this regard, a panellist noted a recent resurgence in the development of ocean thermal energy conversion in the tropics, albeit at a small experimental scale.

22. Some delegations highlighted the desirability of adopting measures and regulations for the protection of the marine environment in the promotion of marine renewable energies.

23. The importance of lowering operational costs to facilitate the development of relevant technologies was also recognized. A panellist suggested that incentives, such as cost differentials between on-land fossil fuel exploitation and offshore electricity production, or fiscal support for the exploitation of marine renewable energies could increase investments in research and development.

24. The need for coherent and transparent regulatory frameworks was emphasized by some delegations. A panellist referred to the issue of regulation of renewable energy installations and production, and observed that in several developed countries these installations were located on sites leased from the State. In some cases, the leases were granted in conformity with the national marine spatial planning programmes and required operators to obtain the requisite licenses and permits, provide financial guarantees in case of damage to the environment and pay licensing fees. Another panellist noted that a percentage of royalties from the energy production could be allocated to local communities.

25. Recalling General Assembly resolution 2749 (XXV), in which the Assembly had declared that the seabed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as well as the resources of the area, were the common heritage of mankind, an enquiry was made whether a specific set of regulations akin to that in place for minerals found in the Area might be required for biota harvested in the Area for use as biofuels, hydrogen production or other forms of marine renewable energies. A panellist responded that the current regime for resources from the Area was focused on minerals and on extraction rather than energy production but suggested that the jurisdictional scope of the International Seabed Authority could be expanded. This panellist also noted lacunas in the regimes applicable to methods utilized for the transmission of offshore energy onto land and the need to ensure the coherence of measures applicable in the Area and in areas within national jurisdiction.

26. In response to a question posed with regard to the construction and maintenance of marine renewable energies installations, a panellist noted that floating devices could be easier to maintain than structures attached to the sea floor. Several panellists noted that biofouling was a problem in some regions. These panellists observed that there were currently no international standards for the

construction and removal of marine renewable energy installations, but indicated that certain International Maritime Organization regulations for offshore installations could serve as a reference, including with respect to safety and exclusion zones. Some panellists pointed out that national legislation in some countries addressed the removal of installations and that regulations relating to offshore oil and gas installations could be applied by analogy to marine renewable energy facilities. Some delegations noted that assessments of the long-term environmental impacts of such energies were scarce, given the relatively short experience with marine renewable energies to date, and indicated that caution should therefore be exercised.

27. Attention was drawn to the potential role of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in relation to marine renewable energies. A panellist indicated that IRENA currently had a limited role in this regard and noted that the International Energy Agency (IEA), which was cooperating with IRENA, was more actively engaged in marine renewable energies.

2. Ongoing or planned marine renewable energies projects/work at the global and regional levels

(a) Panel presentations

28. Arjoon Suddhoo, Executive Director, Mauritius Research Council, described the ongoing projects and opportunities for the development of marine renewable energies in his country, including a long-term, land-based oceanic industry. He mentioned the Maurice Île Durable Vision, which sets out the country's commitment to increasing the share of renewable energy, and stated that the Government programme for 2012-2015 emphasizes the development of an ocean economy. He highlighted the need for innovative business partnerships, science-based policymaking and effective regulatory regimes in the further development of marine renewable energies.

29. Masahiro Matsuura, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Tokyo, presented non-technical barriers to the development of offshore wind development in Japan, including the concerns of developers and stakeholders, in particular fishing communities. He highlighted initiatives to build support from those communities for offshore wind development. Mr. Matsuura stressed the importance of considering regulatory, political and cultural aspects in the development of marine renewable energies.

30. Omar bin Yaakob, Professor, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Malaysian University of Technology, spoke on marine renewable energy initiatives in Malaysia and South-East Asia, in particular with regard to ocean thermal energy conversion. He highlighted the challenges relating to policy and institutional frameworks, technological development, unsustainable research and development, conflicting uses and barriers to market development. He then emphasized the differences between the theoretical, technical and practical potential of sources of energy and stressed the need for technical expertise and financial assistance, regional cooperation in research and development and region-specific technologies for marine renewable energies.

31. Segen Estefen, Professor of Ocean Structures, Instituto Alberto Luiz Coimbra de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa de Engenharia, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro,

described ocean energy in view of the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on renewable energy sources and climate change mitigation, with an emphasis on activities in Brazil. He stressed the technical and resource potential of marine renewable energies, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the difficulties in assessing the costs of such technologies. Mr. Estefan noted the theoretical potential for ocean energy, which easily exceeded present human energy requirements, and stressed the need to assess the feasibility of technologies in the light of capacity factors. He highlighted the importance of, inter alia, technical improvements, successful deployment experience and synergies with the oil and gas industry to reduce the costs of marine renewable energies.

(b) Plenary and panel discussions

32. Delegations emphasized the significant potential of marine renewable energies to contribute to energy needs, improve economic well-being and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The need for the sustainable development of these resources was also stressed. Several delegations also emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination in sharing best practices and in technology transfer, as well as research and development.

33. Many delegations provided information on policies or legislation relevant to marine renewable energy, and on the planned and ongoing marine renewable energy projects in their respective countries, including efforts to reach competitive commercial production.

34. Delegations were also made aware of a number of regional initiatives, such as the Waiheke Declaration, adopted in September 2011 by the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, in which they committed to improving energy security through greater efficiency measures and the promotion of clean and affordable energy, including renewable energy. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/Subcommission for the Western Pacific Workshop on the Status of Marine Renewable Energy Technology Development in Western Pacific was held in Kuala Lumpur, in February 2012, and had aimed, inter alia, at facilitating the establishment of a research and development network, sharing relevant best practices and identifying pilot projects among member States. The Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in Small Island Developing States was adopted in May 2012 by the leaders of the Alliance of Small Island States, who called, in the context of sustainable development, for affordable and modern energy access, renewable energy, energy efficiency and low carbon development.

35. Views were expressed in favour of long-term political commitments for marine renewable energy projects and for broad goals rather than detailed targets. A view was expressed on the importance of securing supplies of, and markets for, energy in the development of marine renewable energies projects, as well as a single approval process. Proper planning of installations and the adoption of mitigation measures, as well as the application of the precautionary approach was also emphasized.

36. Several delegations raised questions over financing and how to attract investments in marine renewable energy projects, including through public-private partnerships. A panellist indicated that business models for marine renewable energy projects were being developed, but noted complexities given the wide range of issues that could be addressed, including potential damage to the marine

environment. Through public-private partnerships, Governments could facilitate the development of projects with input from various stakeholders. It was also noted that, in some developing countries, the project scale was small and did not require large investments.

37. Several delegations and panellists highlighted the valuable lessons that could be learned from the oil and gas industry experience and the usefulness of developing synergies with this industry. Some panellists drew attention to the fact that the challenges faced by the two industries were similar, in particular in the deployment of offshore platforms and the transmission of energy to land-based facilities. Developers of marine renewable energies could also benefit from the use of common testing facilities and from the experience gained in the design, construction, installation and maintenance of large-scale oil and gas facilities at sea.

38. Several delegations highlighted the importance of resolving conflicting uses in the development of marine renewable energy projects. The need to explore compromises among ocean energy developers and stakeholders, such as coastal communities and fishermen, was underscored. The role of marine spatial planning and stakeholder participation in the decision-making process was highlighted by several delegations, as well as the need to compensate users of the oceans, in particular fishing communities. Attention was drawn to experiences where fishermen had the right to be compensated when traditional fishing grounds were no longer available.

39. The importance of addressing the impacts on the freedom of navigation was also highlighted. It was suggested that, while the concerns of local stakeholders, such as fishermen, could be addressed through domestic regulatory and policy frameworks, the issue of freedom of navigation was a matter of international concern. A panellist suggested that such issues could be addressed through inter-agency coordination within Governments. Another panellist indicated that marine renewable energy projects, such as floating platforms, did not generally interfere with navigation. More permanent installations, such as tidal barrages, could be properly marked. Reference was made in this regard to the long-standing experience of tidal barrage power stations and the importance of updating such technologies to conform to new standards as established, for example, at the regional level. The need to further study the impacts of such barrages on the marine environment was highlighted.

40. The need to strengthen capacity and increase research in the development of marine renewable energies was stressed by several delegations. A panellist suggested that regional working groups could be developed to share information and coordinate joint projects on marine renewable energies, as was being undertaken in South-East Asia.

41. The difficulties encountered by small island developing States with regard to marine renewable energies were highlighted. The development of marine renewable energies by those States was considered to be an especially daunting task in the light of the other challenges they faced relating to dependence on external sources of energy and high vulnerability to natural disasters. The importance of strong political commitment in these countries to promote marine renewable energies, in spite of these challenges, was emphasized by some panellists. Several delegations called for cooperation to assist small island developing States in developing the necessary capacity and for facilitating the transfer of marine technology.

42. Questions were raised regarding the potential of marine biofuels as an energy source, including the possible impacts on the marine environment and the opportunities for developing countries. A panellist responded that exploitation studies on marine biofuels were being conducted, but that progress had been limited to the laboratory stage.

43. Some delegations raised concerns over the possible impacts of marine renewable energy projects on the marine environment, in particular from ocean thermal energy conversion. A panellist explained that the environmental impacts of ocean thermal energy conversion depended on the nature of the water-recycling system, and it was noted that a closed-circuit system would have virtually no impact on the marine environment. Attention was also drawn to the possible impacts of offshore wind energy development on landscape and seascape aesthetics and property market values, as well as on cultural and religious interests.

44. Some delegations enquired about the possible location of marine renewable energy installations in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Some panellists, while noting that marine renewable energy projects were not currently being developed in these areas, indicated that it was theoretically possible. The energy potential of these areas was noted. Questions were raised over the ownership and the transmission of energy to land-based facilities from areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as the appropriate forum for the resolution of possible jurisdictional issues. Some panellists suggested that these issues should be addressed at the international level.

3. Opportunities and challenges in the development of marine renewable energies, including for cooperation and coordination

(a) Panel presentations

45. Vanessa E. H. Stewart, Chief Operating Officer and Co-founder, Soltage LLC, gave a presentation on the opportunities and challenges in the development of the renewable energy sector. In particular, she emphasized that in order to support growth in new energy sources, development and policy plans should ensure that energy production costs could compete with other generation sources. For this purpose, the panellist reviewed the risk factors and mitigation opportunities for developing a scalable investment climate for countries in which marine renewable energies represented promising generation sources.

46. Martin J. Attrill, Director, Marine Institute, University of Plymouth, focused on the environmental impacts of marine renewable energies, and reviewed the evidence of operational impacts of various types of marine renewable energy devices on birds and marine organisms. He observed that studies had indicated that marine renewable energy devices would not have major adverse impacts on marine populations and that their presence could have positive impacts by providing new habitats for colonization and protection from damaging extractive activities.

47. Dengwen Xia, Deputy Director, National Ocean Technology Centre of Tianjin, spoke on the opportunities and challenges in the development of marine renewable energies in China. He provided an overview of marine renewable energy policies, technologies and projects in his country and highlighted the opportunities stemming from the increased attention of the Government on marine renewable energies, the growing involvement of various sectors and stakeholders, the experience in research and development on marine renewable energy, technical and technological

foundations, environmental protection and the promotion of economic growth and poverty eradication. In terms of challenges, he noted the lack of key technologies, the possible negative impacts on the marine environment, conflicts over ocean space uses, and the growing gaps between developing and developed countries. Mr. Xia stressed the importance of increased cooperation and proposed the establishment of global coordination frameworks as well as strengthening the role of regional organizations, including enhancing participation in the IEA Implementing Agreement on Ocean Energy Systems.

48. Joseph Williams, Manager, Energy Programme, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) secretariat, outlined the opportunities and challenges in the development of marine renewable energies in the Caribbean region and noted that renewable energy and energy efficiency could provide a response to the energy challenges of CARICOM countries. He emphasized the opportunities for marine renewable energies, since all CARICOM States were surrounded by the sea, with proximity to load centres on the coast, as well as support for ocean thermal energy conversion and relatively low demand for electricity. Mr. Williams also identified key challenges, including weak support for research and development for renewable energy, limited international support for unproven technologies and the potential conflict between marine renewable energy development and the tourism sector.

(b) Plenary and panel discussions

49. Delegations recognized that marine renewable energies offered unprecedented opportunities, but also presented environmental, economic and social challenges, especially to developing countries, including with regard to undertaking scientific research and acquiring technological knowledge.

50. Many delegations emphasized that sustainable funding, technology transfer and capacity-building were critical to ensuring that developing countries with potential natural renewable energy resources, in particular small island developing States, could benefit from these resources. Some delegations underscored the need for further efforts in this regard, since marine renewable energies were still at the early stages of development and were expensive to deploy. In addition, most of the resources needed to generate marine renewable energies were not accessible to developing countries. Many delegations also emphasized the long-term impact of investments in marine renewable energies in their markets.

51. Promoting international cooperation among developed countries, within regional and international organizations and between developed and developing countries, was highlighted. At the regional level, it was noted that marine renewable energies could play a role in the Mediterranean region by bridging the economies of North Africa and Southern Europe through the strengthening of technical cooperation and exchange of knowledge. With reference to the experience of the Caribbean countries, regional cooperation was highlighted as an important element for the future development of marine renewable energies.

52. Several delegations drew attention to projects for technology transfer and capacity-building. In this regard, it was observed that IRENA supported technology cooperation, capacity-building and policy advice. Several delegations also noted the possibilities for technology transfer and the exchange of knowledge in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climat Change.

53. The importance of governmental policies and financial support in encouraging investments in marine renewable energies was underscored by some delegations. Particular emphasis was given to developing regulatory frameworks in conformity with international law. In this regard, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was highlighted as the legal framework for any discussion on the development and exploitation of marine renewable energies.

54. In response to a question on the types of incentives for marine renewable energy technologies to achieve their commercial potential, a panellist emphasized that Governments should support site assessment and site access for nascent technologies, as these elements could pose financial and logistical challenges for developers. Feed-in tariffs could offer suitable incentives for more mature technologies. The costs of marine renewable energies should be lowered to make them an attractive alternative to fossil fuels, in the view of several delegations.

55. Among the challenges faced in the development of marine renewable energies, it was noted that investing in new technologies was generally limited to States with the financial means to accept the risks associated with technologies and sources of energies that were not yet commercially viable. In that regard, developing countries could generally invest in marine renewable energies that were more mature. The potential role of "the Green Fund" under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the nationally appropriate mitigation actions in the context of the Climate Change Convention, with special emphasis on the Caribbean region, was highlighted by several delegations. Issues of supply of technology for commercially available marine renewable energies were also noted.

56. Several delegations stressed that the development of marine renewable energy production would require a structured process for the allocation of ocean space. Delegations were informed of certain legislative frameworks that envisaged marine plans at the regional level to apply area-specific management of marine resources and activities. These plans had improved the understanding of the activities taking place and provided greater certainty for developers, while reducing the burdens on the industry.

57. Attention was also drawn to marine spatial planning as an important tool to manage competing demands and to reduce the possibility for conflicts among the traditional and new uses of the oceans. Delegations also noted that such tools could sustain ecosystem functions and services, provide for public access and increase certainty and predictability for economic investments. Some delegations noted other tools that could be used to manage marine renewable energies, including strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and ecosystem-based management.

58. Several delegations recalled the need to give due consideration to the potential adverse environmental, social and cultural impacts of marine renewable energies. A panellist indicated that a comprehensive evaluation of all relevant environmental, social and economic aspects should be conducted and that marine renewable energy projects should be pursued if these factors were generally favourable. It was also stressed that assessments of the impacts of marine renewable energy projects should consider the impacts on other existing uses of the oceans, in particular the impacts of large-scale marine renewable energy facilities on navigation, including from changes in the speed and direction of currents.

59. It was also recalled that the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas had called for further research on the effects of wind farms on cetaceans and for strategic environmental assessments in connection with the location of marine renewable energy sites, as well as mitigation measures. Several delegations reported undertaking comprehensive environmental monitoring for large-scale offshore wind farms, and noted that the outcomes were being taken into account in marine spatial planning. With regard to cumulative impacts, a panellist recommended that any assessment of the impacts of noise pollution should take a balanced approach and consider how such pollution could be reduced from all sources. A view was expressed to suggest that baseline data should be gathered in order to facilitate future assessments, especially for the possible cumulative effects of marine renewable energies on the marine environment.

60. A question was raised on whether impact assessment reports for marine renewable energies were publicly available in the light of articles 205 and 206 of the Convention. A panellist clarified that some assessments were carried out by private companies and were considered to be commercially sensitive and therefore not publicly available. Examples of publicly available assessments were provided.

Agenda item 4
Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

61. Andrew Hudson, UN-Oceans Coordinator, reported on the activities of UN-Oceans. He updated the meeting on follow-up actions to General Assembly resolution 66/231. In this regard, he informed the meeting that the review of UN-Oceans by the Joint Inspection Unit had commenced in early 2012 and was expected to be completed in time for the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. He also noted that UN-Oceans had established an online consultative process on the preparation of draft terms of reference for UN-Oceans for consideration by the Assembly at its forthcoming session.

62. The Coordinator highlighted that the United Nations Atlas of Oceans, an activity under UN-Oceans, was celebrating 10 years of sharing ocean-related information and that it was receiving approximately 10,000 visits per month.

63. Mr. Hudson also briefed the meeting on the activities of UN-Oceans and its member agencies in the context of the forthcoming Rio+20 Conference. He pointed out that the responding agencies were actively providing various inputs to the Conference, including through the submission of reports and the organization of events in Rio de Janeiro.

64. He informed the meeting that the full report of the ninth meeting of UN-Oceans was available on the UN-Oceans website. The tenth meeting would be held at the International Exposition 2012 at Yeosu, Republic of Korea, on 11 August 2012.

65. In response to questions regarding the structure and functioning of UN-Oceans, and the potential usefulness of establishing an executive board for UN-Oceans, similar to that of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Mr. Hudson observed that UN-Oceans was

a coordination mechanism for United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and not an organization or institution with dedicated staff and funding.

66. In relation to concerns raised about coherence in the objectives of Member States and those of UN-Oceans, Mr. Hudson expressed the view that the terms of reference of UN-Oceans clearly defined the scope of UN-Oceans by ensuring the coherence of the United Nations system activities on oceans and coastal areas with the mandates of the General Assembly, and the priorities contained in the Millennium Development Goals, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the governing bodies of all UN-Oceans members.

67. Some delegations suggested that the participation and interaction of Member States in meetings and decision-making processes of UN Oceans should be improved, and that the work of the mechanism should be made more transparent. In that regard, they recalled the request to UN-Oceans, in accordance with paragraph 239 of resolution 66/231, to submit the draft terms of reference for its work to be considered by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. They also welcomed the review of UN-Oceans by the Joint Inspection Unit and hoped that the review could address these issues. In response, Mr. Hudson expressed the view that Member States participated in several ways, including through reporting to the Informal Consultative Process. As regards transparency, he noted that details on the activities of UN-Oceans were available on its website.

Agenda item 5
Process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly

68. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the selection of panellists for the meeting and the balanced representation from different regions, including from developing countries. Appreciation for the work of the Co-Chairs in that regard was expressed.

69. As to the selection of topics to be discussed at upcoming meetings of the Informal Consultative Process, it was recalled that at the tenth meeting it had been decided that all future topics should be considered in relation to the three pillars of sustainable development.

70. The view was expressed that the consideration, approval and adoption of topics for subsequent meetings should continue to improve. In this regard, it was noted that the General Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, would be considering new topics. It was emphasized that efforts should be made to improve the understanding of the proposed topics by providing a concept paper prior to the first round of informal consultations on the annual General Assembly resolution on oceans and the law of the sea, so as to facilitate discussions during the consultations.

Agenda item 6
Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

71. The Co-Chairs drew attention to the composite streamlined list that they had prepared of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea.[3] Several delegations noted that suggestions to that effect were linked to the possible renewal of the mandate of the Informal Consultative Process by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. A view was expressed in favour of a further extension of such mandate.

72. A proposal was made, and supported by several delegations, for the fourteenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process to carry out an in-depth review of the oceans-related outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, and how those outcomes would impact and benefit international coordination and cooperation. The consideration of issues relating to sea-level rises and their impact on security and survival, particularly on the low-lying coastal areas and island nations, against the background of sustainable development was also suggested by many delegations. In addition, they proposed another theme for consideration on aspects of marine scientific research related to sustainable development.

[3] Available at: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process_info.htm#Information%20for%20participants.

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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 13 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

It is my honour to inform you that the Government of Estonia has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015 for one of the seats allocated to the Eastern European States at the elections to be held in 2012.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, please find attached a statement of the voluntary pledges of Estonia expressing our commitment to and active engagement in the protection and promotion of human rights (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Margus **Kolga**
Ambassador

* A/67/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Estonia to the Human Rights Council, 2013-2015

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The promotion and protection of human rights is a national priority of Estonia and an integral part of its foreign policy. Its international efforts are aimed at strengthening security, development and human rights in the world. As part of those efforts, Estonia is presenting its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015 in order to more actively contribute to the Council's work for the promotion of human rights.

2. Estonia supports the human rights institutions of the United Nations and the integration of human rights in all United Nations activities. It believes that the Human Rights Council represents the goal of United Nations Member States to advance the protection of human rights and is fully committed to ensuring the effectiveness of the Council, which would lead to the tangible improvement of human rights across the world. Estonia pledges to work with all Council members in an open, constructive and cross-regional manner to achieve that goal, and believes that the Council should be able not only to respond, in a timely and responsible manner, to all urgent human rights questions, but also to advance and develop universal human rights issues.

3. Estonia cooperates with and supports the bodies and mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. It will continue to support the functioning of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has issued a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders. It will work to enhance dialogue with the special procedures mandate holders with a view to discussing and disseminating their work. Estonia advocates the promotion of an open dialogue with civil society that contributes to the advancement of human rights, based on its experience in working in cooperation with civil society on policy formulation and implementation.

4. Estonia highly values the role of the United Nations as a multilateral forum for the promotion of peace and security, development and human rights. It has actively contributed to the work of all United Nations bodies, including through its membership in the Economic and Social Council (2009-2011), the Commission on the Status of Women (2011-2014), the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2010-2012), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (2011-2012). Estonia has played an active role, including by strengthening cooperation in humanitarian affairs during its Vice-Presidency of the Economic and Social Council in 2009 and through its role as a co-facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations in 2010 that led to the establishment of UN-Women.

International contribution

Adherence to human rights instruments

5. Estonia had already acceded to 11 United Nations human rights instruments before the entry into force of its Constitution in 1992. To date, Estonia has acceded to most of the international and regional human rights agreements, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

6. Estonia regularly submits reports on its implementation of the conventions. In 2010 Estonia presented its reports on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In 2011 it presented its reports on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Cooperation with special procedures

7. Estonia has issued a standing invitation to all the special procedures mandate holders and has received visits from the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (2007) and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2008). Estonia has also recognized the competence of the Human Rights Committee and, recently, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and hear individual complaints. Estonia is also considering recognizing the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

8. Estonia pledges to continue to submit regular reports on its implementation of the human rights instruments and to maintain and promote the system for distributing the conclusions and recommendations made by the treaty bodies and special procedures to the relevant authorities, non-governmental organizations and the general public in Estonia.

Universal periodic review

9. The human rights situation in Estonia was examined in the framework of the universal periodic review in 2011, and Estonia has undertaken a coordinated effort to implement the recommendations and voluntary commitments that it has accepted within the framework of the review. Estonia considers the universal periodic review a unique process by its terms and by its aim to improve the human rights situation throughout the world, and will continue to be actively involved in the universal periodic review debates.

Contribution to international initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights

10. Through regular voluntary donations made within multilateral development cooperation, Estonia has since 1998 provided support to an increasing number of United Nations funds and programmes aimed at protecting human rights, including promoting the situation and rights of women and girls, including OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)/UN-Women and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. Estonia started that contribution as soon as economic conditions after its independence made it possible, and has continued it throughout the recent economic crisis.

11. In addition, Estonia has provided consistent support in the field of humanitarian assistance to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition to regular donations, Estonia has made targeted contributions in support of victims of specific humanitarian crises, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, including women and children.

12. Under the development cooperation and humanitarian assistance strategy of Estonia for the period 2011-2015, one of the goals of the country's development cooperation is supporting human development and increasing the availability of education and health care in developing countries, focusing on women and children. In accordance with its strategy, Estonia aims to improve the situation of women and children living in poverty in developing countries through its bilateral development activities, mainly in priority partner countries, such as Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

13. Estonia will continue to provide contributions for activities aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights, including contributions to the United Nations funds supporting the development and the promotion of the situation of indigenous peoples and facilitating the participation of the representatives of indigenous peoples in United Nations discussions (the Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations).

Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations human rights agencies, programmes and initiatives

14. Estonia will maintain its annual contribution to support the activities of OHCHR and will continue its cooperation with the Office.

Women's rights

15. Estonia actively participates in the United Nations intergovernmental discussions on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, being a full member of the latter from 2011 to 2014. From 2007 to 2009, Estonia held the chairmanship of the Consultative Committee on the United Nations Development Fund for Women and, as one of the co-facilitators, led the negotiations on the United Nations system-wide coherence

reform in 2009 and 2010, which resulted in an agreement on the creation of UN-Women.

16. Estonia supports the principles and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security. It adopted a national action plan for the implementation of the resolution aimed at advancing and systematizing efforts to promote the situation and participation of women in the country's activities relating to conflict management and its peacebuilding efforts.

Commitments through regional organizations

17. Estonia is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Council of Europe and the European Union and participates actively in the human rights-related activities of those organizations, placing special emphasis on the rights of women.

National contribution, pledges and commitments

18. The generally recognized principles and rules of international law, including those pertaining to human rights, are an inseparable part of the Estonian legal system. International agreements are directly incorporated into domestic law by ratification. Fundamental rights scrutiny is carried out throughout the legislative process, and any legal act not consistent with the duties arising from a ratified international agreement cannot be applied and may be declared invalid by the Supreme Court.

19. In accordance with the Constitution, the Chancellor of Justice is an independent official who reviews legislation of the legislative and executive powers and local authorities for conformity with the Constitution and the laws. An important function of the Chancellor of Justice is to act as an ombudsman. On that basis, the Chancellor must monitor whether State agencies comply with the principle of guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms and the principle of good administration. Since 2007, the Chancellor also functions as the national preventive mechanism established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and, since February 2011, as Children's Ombudsman pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Government of Estonia will continue to provide support to and cooperate with the Office of the Chancellor of Justice with a view to ensuring its full compliance with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles).

20. Under the Equal Treatment Act and the Gender Equality Act, the Commissioner for Gender Equality and Equal Treatment receives applications from individuals and expresses his or her opinion on possible cases of discrimination. The Commissioner also assists individuals with submissions of complaints concerning discrimination. Another task of the Commissioner is to introduce and promote the principle of equal treatment among the general public. Finding additional financial resources for this is one of the main obligations of Estonia in further developing the institution of the Commissioner.

21. Estonia will step up its efforts in the area of equal treatment and gender equality, especially with regard to the rights of women, and in improving the guarantees in the administration of justice, first and foremost by reducing the length of judicial proceedings and improving the compensation mechanisms in case of errors made in the administration of justice.

22. Over the years Estonia has adopted close to 70 national strategies and development plans, most of which also address the implementation of human rights. The Development Plan for Reducing Violence for 2010-2014, including measures to combat trafficking in human beings; the Estonian integration programme for 2008-2013, which supports the principle of equal treatment; the Civil Society Development Plan for 2011-2014; and the Development Plan for Children and Families, currently elaborated, are just some of them. Estonia will continue to implement and develop State strategies and action plans with special emphasis on the protection and promotion of human rights.

23. Various interest groups are consulted in drafting development plans and strategies. In 2005, the Government, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, drew up a document on good practices on involvement. The purpose of involvement is to improve the quality of decisions and their social legitimacy by involving non-governmental organizations and the private and public sectors in the decision-making process: a government agency or a non-governmental or representative organization drafting a document should involve all stakeholders in the decision-making, thus helping to ensure balance and the consideration of public interests. The Government initiative is on the way to making the use of an Internet forum for such consultations a compulsory part of the elaboration of any Government legislative proposal. Thus, the Government of Estonia pledges to continue dialogue and further enhance cooperation with civil society.

24. Estonia will start preparations for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and is considering the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention against Discrimination in Education.

United Nations A/67/122

General Assembly

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3 July 2012

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Sixty-seventh session
Item 111 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 6 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan submitted its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held in November 2012 for the period 2013-2015.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations would be grateful if its candidature could be included in the preparations for that election, and would suggest that it be included in the programme of work under the agenda item entitled "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council".

In that regard, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the honour to transmit herewith its written statement of voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006 (see annex). I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated to the States Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Byrganym **Aitimova**
Ambassador

* A/67/50.

12-40395 (E) 090712

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 6 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire on the candidature of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015

Voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has declared the policy of democratization and rule of law to ensure equal rights to its citizens, recognizing human life, rights and freedoms as supreme values of society. Kazakhstan successfully moves to building a free and open society through democratic transformations in a newly formed State.

Kazakhstan fully supports the idea of the Human Rights Council and the procedure of the universal periodic review as an efficient, reliable and transparent mechanism for monitoring the observance of human rights.

The decision of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to seek membership of the Human Rights Council is based on the following defining factors.

Kazakhstan as a responsible party to the majority of international conventions in the field of human rights

Kazakhstan has taken major steps towards strengthening international human rights standards in its national legislation.

Kazakhstan is a party to the following fundamental conventions:

(a) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol of 1966;

(b) International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights of 1966;

(c) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1965;

(d) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and its Optional Protocol of 2000;

(e) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984 and its Optional Protocol of 2002;

(f) Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and its two Optional Protocols of 2000;

(g) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948;

(h) Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951.

Kazakhstan recognizes the competence of the United Nations Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee over individual complaints of rights infringement under the relevant treaties.

The important step towards further extension of human rights protection mechanisms in the country was the signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2008, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in September 2010 at the opening of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Kazakhstan's active cooperation with the United Nations special procedures and the mechanism of the universal periodic review

Kazakhstan works in close collaboration with international structures monitoring observance of human rights by submitting national reports to the United Nations treaty bodies, implementing their recommendations as well as harmonizing the national legislation along with its commitments.

In February 2010, Kazakhstan successfully underwent the first cycle of the universal periodic review, which demonstrated steady and meaningful progress in the field of human rights protection. The universal periodic review process was instrumental in assessing the achievements and defining the objectives towards further promotion and protection of human rights in view of new challenges.

Kazakhstan has also shown significant progress by fulfilling its pledges while submitting national periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In July 2011, the first national report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was presented to the Human Rights Committee.

Confirming its commitment to transparent and constructive cooperation with all partners, Kazakhstan in 2009 extended permanent invitations to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council. The same year Kazakhstan was visited by the Special Rapporteur on torture, M. Novak, and the Independent Expert on minority issues, G. McDougall, and in September 2010 by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, R. Rolnik.

Kazakhstan appreciates universal periodic review recommendations suggested by the States Members of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, United Nations treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the findings and recommendations of Special Rapporteurs summarizing their missions to our country. The Government has developed, and is successfully implementing, appropriate action plans. Thus, Kazakhstan fully assures adherence to its commitments.

Protection and promotion of human rights: the utmost priorities of Kazakhstan's internal policy

Kazakhstan carries out well-established and comprehensive legal reform to ensure civil, political, social, economic and cultural human rights in accordance with internationally recognized norms and principles.

Large-scale legislative work to further improve the human rights protection system in Kazakhstan has been carried out in full compliance with the provisions of the adopted National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2012 and the Concept of Legal Policy for 2010-2020.

These strategic documents aimed at establishing a more effective, consistent and coordinated policy to introduce the best legislative and law enforcement practices in the human dimension, involving State bodies and non-governmental and international organizations.

It should be noted that the National Human Rights Action Plan is a far-reaching document, giving a detailed workplan to achieve internationally accepted standards in the human rights area.

The Action Plan fully incorporates the recommendations of Special Rapporteurs and the United Nations treaty bodies on human rights.

At present, the majority of recommendations announced in the Concept of Legal Policy and in the Human Rights Action Plan have already been accomplished. In particular, legislative acts on further humanization of criminal laws and strengthening of legal guarantees in criminal procedure, combating corruption, improvement of the judicial system, providing qualified legal aid, guaranteed volume of medicaid, social support for vulnerable groups, the privacy right, offence prevention as well as consumer rights' protection were enacted. Along with them, the Law on Refugees was adopted, which defines the legal status of refugees and persons seeking asylum within the territory of Kazakhstan.

To fully ensure women's rights, the stepwise implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2006-2016 is carried out. It is a fundamental document and instrument for national gender policy implementation. Acts "On the prevention of domestic violence" and "Equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women" were enacted.

There are about 5,000 non-governmental organizations active in Kazakhstan. To achieve comprehensive political pluralism and strengthening women's role and status in social and political life, legislative measures are being enacted.

Within the framework of establishing a foolproof torture prevention system in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a bill on the formation of a national preventive mechanism is being drafted at the national level.

In order to guarantee State protection of rights and freedoms of citizens, there are various human rights institutions operating in Kazakhstan, such as the National Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Ombudsman, the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy, the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan and the Committee for Protection of Children's Rights.

Kazakhstan implements the policy of gradual abolition of the death penalty. In 2003, by decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, an indefinite moratorium on the death penalty was declared; the process of criminal laws humanization and liberalization is under way. In 2004, life imprisonment was enforced as an alternative to the death penalty until a decision on its total abolition has been adopted.

In 2006, Kazakhstan joined the European Union Memorandum on abolition of the death penalty, which became the basis of General Assembly resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007 entitled "Moratorium on the use of the death penalty", also supported by Kazakhstan.

In 2010, the Republic of Kazakhstan joined the group of constituent countries (Algeria, Argentina, Dominican Republic, France, Italy, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey) of the International Commission against the Death Penalty, which aims to contribute to international efforts in the fight for announcement of a comprehensive moratorium on the death penalty towards complete abolition of this form of punishment all over the world.

Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with a focus on tolerance and non-discrimination

In 2010, the Republic of Kazakhstan chaired the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Kazakhstan's chairmanship of OSCE was marked by emphasis on initiatives in the human dimension and recommitment by all States members to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act in the twenty-first century.

Observance of fundamental rights and freedoms, democracy, and combating intolerance and discrimination are the basic prerequisites for social stability and sustainable development.

With the positive experience it has achieved in keeping lasting peace and accord in a multicultural and multireligious society, Kazakhstan promoted tolerance and intercultural dialogue during its OSCE chairmanship. Likewise, that experience can be a significant asset in promotion of human rights protection mechanisms within the United Nations.

At the initiative of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/90 declaring 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Since its independence, Kazakhstan has been successfully implementing a balanced State policy of ethnocultural diversity and solidarity to support intercultural and inter-ethnic harmony in the country.

Nowadays, Kazakhstan has proper economic and political frameworks to maintain intercultural dialogue among its people. Kazakhstan established the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, a unique model of inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony.

In Kazakhstan, the principle of tolerance is not only a norm of political culture, but also a key principle of State policy, which is supported and advocated.

The prime focus of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011-2012 is to promote a dialogue between the West and the Islamic world and advance human rights and fundamental freedoms, including equal rights for women.

Human Rights Council

If elected as a member of the Human Rights Council, Kazakhstan intends to:

(a) Enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the Human Rights Council;

(b) Promote the observance of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights with due regard for the rights of the most vulnerable groups;

(c) Follow the highest standards of interaction during the universal periodic review, based on the principles of fairness, impartiality, non-selectivity and constructive dialogue;

(d) Actively promote the effectiveness of the universal periodic review;

(e) Promote the effective implementation of the mandates by special procedures;

(f) Expand outreach activities of the United Nations human rights mechanisms;

(g) Serve as the catalyst for policy formulation related to democratic reforms at the regional and subregional levels in accordance with best practices learned as a member of the Human Rights Council.

Kazakhstan presents its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2013-2015 at the election to be held by the General Assembly during its sixty-seventh session in November 2012 in New York. Therefore, we would highly appreciate support for our country at this election.

United Nations A/67/123

General Assembly

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Sixty-seventh session
Item 111 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 11 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that Montenegro presented its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2013-2015 at the elections to be held during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 2012 under agenda item 111 (d) of the preliminary list (A/67/50), entitled "Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council".

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, I have the honour to submit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of Montenegro to the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Milorad **Šćepanović**
Ambassador

* A/67/50.

12-40289 (E) 190712

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 11 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Aide-memoire on the candidature of Montenegro to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015

As a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multireligious society, Montenegro is strongly committed to the protection and promotion of human rights, and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, while confirming its readiness to contribute to the establishment of the highest legal standards for the protection of human rights both at the national and international levels.

Being aware of the importance given to human rights promotion and protection, Montenegro has actively supported the process of establishment and the institution-building of the Human Rights Council from the very beginning, and participated in the process of its review in 2011. Montenegro welcomed the establishment of a universal periodic review mechanism and firmly believes that it would provide a method for a transparent and objective assessment of the human rights situation in each State Member of the United Nations.

The Government of Montenegro has extended a standing invitation to the Human Rights Council special procedures to visit Montenegro and its institutions.

International level

Having regained independence in 2006, Montenegro is taking a more active role on the international scene in striving for universality and indivisibility of human rights.

Montenegro is a State party to major international treaties dealing with the protection and promotion of human rights, including (but not limited to):

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including its Optional Protocols concerning individual complaints and the abolition of the death penalty)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (including its Optional Protocol)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (including its Optional Protocol)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (including its Optional Protocol)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (including its Optional Protocol)
- Convention on the Non-applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- International Convention against Apartheid in Sports
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons
- Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field; Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea; Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and their two Additional Protocols
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

Montenegro has signed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

Montenegro accepted being subject to all communication procedures of the United Nations human rights treaties it has ratified and made no reservations to any of those treaties.

Montenegro is also a party to 69 International Labour Organization conventions.

As a party to the fundamental human rights instruments, which were incorporated into national law following their ratification, Montenegro submits periodic reports to the relevant treaty bodies and implements recommendations and concluding observations made upon their examination of reports. In order to make the treaty body system more efficient, Montenegro is committed to contribute to the process of its strengthening. Montenegro successfully underwent the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review in 2008 during its first reporting cycle. Montenegro was among the countries which supported and co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution on the abolition of the death penalty (resolution 62/149).

Additionally, at the regional level, Montenegro actively cooperates with the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the field of protection of human and minority rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as on promotion of the rule of law and further democratization of society. Montenegro has signed or ratified a number of Council of Europe conventions:

- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (including its Protocols Nos. 1-8 and Nos. 11-14)
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (including its Protocols Nos. 1 and 2)
- Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine: Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (including its Additional Protocols)
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

Being a party to major human rights treaties, Montenegro not only clearly demonstrates the support of their goals, but its active participation in creation and implementation of new standards in promotion and protection of human rights.

As a State party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1954) and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1960), the Government of Montenegro is strongly engaged in resolving the issue of displacement and ensuring durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons at the regional level fleeing the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

National level

Human rights are among the Government's top priorities on the domestic policy agenda.

After independence, on the already existing base, Montenegro has renewed the human rights protection and promotion system through the improvement of the legal framework, encouragement of respect for and protection of human rights and raising awareness of the entire society on this issue. Comprehensive legislative reforms were carried out in order to comply with relevant international standards.

The Constitution of Montenegro provides a legal basis for the promotion, protection, strengthening and advancement of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the Government's obligation to uphold and respect international standards. Almost half (68 of 158) of the articles of the Constitution refer to human rights and fundamental freedoms, thus confirming its importance in a normative way.

The legal framework in the field of promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms is continuously improved and adjusted to the highest international standards. At this moment, essential laws are the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms, the Law on Child and Social Welfare, the Anti-Discrimination Law, the Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), the Law on Health Care, the Law on Gender Equality, the Labour Law, the Law on Media, the Law on Non-governmental Organizations, the Law on Broadcasting, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and others. It should also be emphasized that the Criminal Code of Montenegro contains provisions on the incrimination of dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, as well as inciting racial discrimination and acts of violence motivated by racism.

Within the Government of Montenegro there are specialized bodies that have a role to further support and advance human rights, mainly the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. Along with the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, the Ministry is, in particular, responsible for providing the human and technical capacities in implementation of project activities for protection and promotion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) persons.

In 2011, Montenegro became the first beneficiary country of the Council of Europe's LGBT project for eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

As a result of the establishment of institutional cooperation between the Government and civil society representatives committed to the protection of rights of the LGBT persons in Montenegro, the Government has formed: (a) a working team for developing the programme document for the fight against homophobia and its action plan, (b) an expert working group for preparation of the analysis of legislation from the aspect of LGBT rights, and (c) an expert working group for preparation of the analysis of human rights of LGBT persons in the textbooks within the education system of Montenegro. A project focused on the public/experts' debate on comparative analysis of the legal recognition of same-sex relationships/marriage in Europe will be initiated with the aim of determining the level and the way how to proceed to harmonize national legal provisions and the constitutional values of equality, dignity and non-discrimination with the relevant international standards in this field.

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights adopted the Rule Book on the contents and manner of keeping the records on cases of reported discrimination, ensuring accurate records and providing information to the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman). That information is included in the special report on discrimination submitted to the Parliament of Montenegro by the Protector.

In August 2011, the Prime Minister's Cabinet was strengthened by the appointment of an adviser for human rights and anti-discrimination.

The Office of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (Ombudsman) is established as an independent institution responsible for:

(a) Protection of human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, other laws, ratified international agreements on human rights and generally accepted international law regulations in case of their violation by an act, action or inactivity of State bodies, local government, public services and other holders of public authority;

(b) Dealing with general issues in the field of protection and improvement of human rights and freedoms, as well as implementation of projects with other organizations that are active in that field;

(c) Dealing with and acting on complaints that refer to the pending legal proceedings and, only in case of filibustering, obvious misuse of the power process and indirect contempt;

(d) Giving initiatives for change and amendment of certain regulations, especially for the sake of their conformity to the internationally recognized standards in the field of human rights and freedoms;

(f) Working within the Human Rights Council to promptly respond to human rights emergencies;

(g) Finding innovative ways to promote effective coordination and mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system;

(h) Strengthening cooperation between Member States, United Nations agencies, other international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society;

(i) Supporting and pursuing international cooperation and dialogue aimed at the improvement of numerous programmes on human rights, gender equality, protection of children, democracy, good governance and the rule of law;

(j) Supporting the initiatives at the regional and international levels to combat religious, ethnic, national or linguistic intolerance and assure adequate protection for all minorities, as well as the initiatives to foster interreligious and intercultural dialogue;

(k) Confirming and increasing its commitment to implement laws and policies for the prevention and combating of violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence;

(l) Submitting regular periodic reports to the human rights treaty bodies, providing participation of a high-level delegation at its presentations and including all structures of Montenegrin society in further implementation of the recommendations and concluding observations made by those bodies.

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General Assembly

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Sixty-seventh session
Item 111 (d) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 29 June 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly and, with reference to the decision of the Government of Sweden to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2013-2015 at the elections to be held in 2012, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, has the honour to submit Sweden's voluntary pledges with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Sweden would be grateful if the present note and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* A/67/50.

12-40206 (E) 190712

Annex to the note verbale dated 29 June 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Sweden to the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015

Voluntary pledges and commitments

Sweden is a first-time candidate to the Human Rights Council, for the period 2013-2015, and has the support of the Nordic countries.

Sweden is deeply committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. Sweden is a long-standing supporter of the United Nations work on human rights — in both political and economic terms — as a Member State, as a State party to core human rights conventions and as a development partner, devoting 1 per cent of its gross national income to international development cooperation. The promotion of democracy and human rights is a key priority in Sweden's bilateral and multilateral development cooperation.

1. Sweden's general objectives

If elected, Sweden would pursue the following general objectives:

- Consolidate the Human Rights Council as the United Nations primary human rights body.
- Promote the realization of all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights — on the basis of international human rights law.
- Enable the Council to fulfil its mandate to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and to address situations of human rights violations.
- Support the Council in mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations system.
- Promote the interdependence of development, peace and security, and human rights.
- Ensure that the Council's mechanisms and instruments are designed, implemented and monitored to enhance the enjoyment of human rights for all.
- Support and strengthen the effective functioning of the universal periodic review process.
- Support opportunities for Member States, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to avail themselves of the Council's mechanisms and instruments.
- Further the Council's interaction with treaty bodies and with regional human rights systems and mechanisms.

2. Sweden's focus

Sweden seeks membership in the Human Rights Council to drive action in a broad range of Council activities, and to work cross-regionally and in a spirit of genuine dialogue and cooperation. Some of the activities where Sweden would drive action would be:

(a) Full and equal enjoyment of human rights

Sweden pledges to:

- Firmly promote the indivisibility, interdependence and universality of human rights.
- Stand firm for the principle that all persons are entitled to the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

(b) Democracy and the rule of law

Sweden pledges to:

- Promote the interlinkages and interdependence between a functioning democracy, strong and accountable institutions, effective rule of law and full respect for all human rights, as a prerequisite for sustainable development.
- Work to improve the capacity of the international community to provide effective support to States seeking to promote and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, including by supporting the efforts of the relevant United Nations structures to integrate and mainstream democracy, the rule of law and human rights into their strategic planning.

(c) Mainstreaming human rights

Sweden pledges to take an active part in the Council's efforts to:

- Accelerate the process of mainstreaming human rights and integrating a human rights-based approach in all areas and at all levels of United Nations action.
- Strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to mainstream human rights in its work in the field.
- Support and develop key, strategic mainstreaming interventions and mechanisms.

(d) Human rights and new information technologies

Sweden pledges to:

- Continue to emphasize that the enjoyment of all human rights extends to the use of new information technologies, such as the Internet.
- Maintain a strong focus on the application of freedom of expression online.
- Support the role of the Council in safeguarding human rights in new information technologies, such as the Internet.

- Continue to advocate that universal access to the Internet should be an overarching objective and that increased access to the infrastructure and contents of the Internet is a precondition for the full enjoyment of human rights, including freedom of expression online.

(e) Women's enjoyment of human rights and gender equality

Sweden pledges to:

- Advocate for universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and for the withdrawal of reservations which are incompatible with the aim and purpose of the Convention.
- Propose and support initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender equality in all United Nations human rights work.
- Support initiatives to increase women's political participation, enhance women's economic empowerment and ensure women's right to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Work for increased attention to the situation of the girl child and girl child empowerment.
- Contribute to maintaining focus on eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

(f) The rights of the child

Sweden pledges to:

- Advocate for the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
- Muster global commitment to effectively eliminate all forms of violence against children.
- Address the issue of harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage, as well as gender stereotyping.
- Contribute to securing the rights of the child and the application of a rule of law perspective to the issue of children in the administration of justice.
- Address the issue of the impact of armed conflict on children, efforts to end recruitment of children and the rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers.

(g) The rights of persons with disabilities

Sweden pledges to:

- Advocate for universal ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.
- Seek to establish a reporting line to the Human Rights Council for the Special Rapporteur on Disability, and continue to support the Special Rapporteur's mandate.

- Work to ensure effective, accessible and inclusive participation at the United Nations; place stronger focus on participation in political and public life, work and employment, including gender equality dimensions.
- Support the work of the recently established United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

(h) Death penalty, torture and summary executions

Sweden pledges to:

- Support the Council's efforts to promote the abolition of the death penalty.
- Maintain the Council's role as main sponsor of resolutions on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and make additional efforts to keep the issue high on the United Nations human rights agenda.
- Renew and support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.
- Support the Council's efforts to combat torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, including promoting the work of the Special Rapporteur.

(i) Business and human rights

Sweden pledges to:

- Encourage and contribute to the dissemination and implementation of the United Nations Framework and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Work for a continued presence of the issue of business and human rights on the Council's agenda.

3. Contributing to the United Nations system

Sweden contributes 1 per cent of its gross national income to international development assistance. Sweden thereby exceeds the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent, and is one of the largest statutory and voluntary contributors to the United Nations budget. Per capita, Sweden is the one of the largest donors in overall contributions to the United Nations system. We view this as part of our commitment to human rights, since we seek to mainstream human rights in all development work, whether multilateral or bilateral. Sweden is also one of the four largest contributors of funds to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Sweden will continue to be a strong partner and a main contributor to OHCHR, and will seek to increase its contributions as needed. We put a strong emphasis on delivering results in the field, and will continue to call for an even more effective and result-oriented human rights protection system worldwide.

Sweden was, for instance, a main financial supporter of the recently opened field office of OHCHR in Tunis.

4. Commitment to United Nations instruments

Sweden is a strong defender of the international human rights system. Sweden advocates for universal ratification of the core United Nations human rights conventions and is a State party to the following instruments:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and its Optional Protocol
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Sweden seeks to promote the effective implementation of the conventions universally, by actively working on the realization of rights at the national level, submitting State Party reports on time and engaging in dialogue with treaty bodies. In parallel, Sweden also actively promotes the strengthening of the treaty body system, including through proper resourcing and targeted capacity-building by States Parties and other stakeholders.

Sweden is a main sponsor of three General Assembly resolutions in support of four of the core human rights conventions and their optional protocols: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural kights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Sweden is currently the President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. Cooperating with the special procedures of the Council

Sweden has extended a standing invitation to all United Nations special rapporteurs and independent experts and has regularly received visits from several rapporteurs. Sweden highly values the opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to contribute to and benefit from the work and findings of the special procedures and mandate holders.

6. Regional engagement

Sweden engages actively in human rights work regionally through membership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union. As a party to the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Sweden has an obligation to abide by judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The work carried out within the Council of Europe has created a common legal platform throughout Europe, ensuring respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

As a member of the European Union, Sweden is bound by the human rights obligations arising from European Union law, such as the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.

7. Human rights in Sweden

(a) Mainstreaming of human rights

Sweden is committed to the mainstreaming of human rights in practice, ensuring human rights are observed and integrated into all aspects of Swedish society. The Swedish Constitution and legal system are based on, and designed to protect and guarantee, the enjoyment of human rights in Sweden.

(b) National Action Plan for Human Rights

The Government is currently preparing its third National Action Plan for Human Rights. As a part of this process, the Government is committed to following up the universal periodic review as well as the conclusions and recommendations of treaty bodies. Civil society, the private sector, public authorities and local administrations are key partners in this process. The Government strives in particular to provide support to civil society organizations, maintaining a constant dialogue with them on human rights issues and challenges. A proposal to establish a national human rights institution is currently being considered.

(c) Gender equality

Ensuring that women fully enjoy all human rights is an important political priority in Sweden. Sweden has come a long way towards gender equality. Women have a high level of participation in political and economic life. Nevertheless, challenges remain in all parts of Swedish society and considerable resources are therefore allocated to gender equality policies. The Government is prioritizing efforts to prevent and combat violence against women and has implemented several comprehensive action plans with new working methods in this area.

(d) Anti-discrimination efforts

Combating all forms of discrimination is one of the key human rights objectives of the Swedish Government. In February 2012, the Government adopted a coordinated and long-term strategy for Roma inclusion for the period 2012-2032. The strategy reinforces the minority policy promoting the rights of all five national minorities: Jews, Roma, Sami, Swedish Finns and Tornedalers. Significant efforts have also been made to increase opportunities for national minorities to use their own language in contacts with national and local authorities.

(e) The rights of persons with disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States to guarantee by law that persons with disabilities, without exception, have the same rights as all people. When ratifying the Convention, the assessment was made that Sweden satisfies the Convention's demands. Sweden is currently awaiting the consideration by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of Sweden's initial report to the Committee.

(f) The rights of the child

The Government is making systematic efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Swedish law and other administrative procedures in all areas that concern children. In 2010, the Riksdag (Parliament) adopted a strategy for public sector actors to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden. The focus now is on implementing the strategy. Other areas in focus are parenting support, the fight against violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation, and children in vulnerable situations.

(g) Countering of hate crimes

The Swedish Government is deeply concerned about hate crimes. The Government is carefully following the efforts of the authorities involved in countering these crimes, in order to further develop crime-prevention mechanisms. Special attention is being paid to the problem of ethnic hatred expressed on the Internet.

(h) Indigenous people

As recognized in the Constitution, the Sami people are the indigenous people of Sweden. Sweden agrees with the Special Rapporteur that despite the relatively high level of attention given to indigenous issues in the Nordic countries, more remains to be done to ensure that the Sami people can enjoy a full range of rights and develop their common goals across national boundaries.

The Swedish Government is committed to supporting and promoting Sami self-determination on issues directly affecting the Sami people. The Sami Parliament is gradually being given increased responsibilities. Together with Norway and Finland, and with the participation of the three Nordic Sami Councils, Sweden is engaged in negotiating a Nordic Sami convention, which would confirm and strengthen the rights of the Sami people.